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ABSTRACT

This document comprises an evaluation of the first-year implementation of the New York City Board of Education's three-year Dropout Prevention Program (DPP), implemented in 10 high schools and 29 middle schools; and the Attendance Improvement Dropout Prevention (AIDP) program, implemented in 3 high schools. Two intervention models were implemented in the middle schools, one that employed Board of Education personnel only (Project Connect) and another that employed personnel both from the Board of Education and community-based organizations (CBOs). The following intervention models were implemented in the high schools: (1) a systemic model, which attempted to serve at-risk students by strengthening a school generally; (2) a case-management model, which targeted services directly to selected at-risk students; (3) a modified systemic model; and (4) a modified case-management model. Information was collected from field observations, interviews with key school and CBO staff, a student survey, and student and budget files provided by the Board of Education. Recommendations for improvement focus on strengthening the role of the Board of Education, increasing communication between administrators, staff, and CBO personnel, and improving service targeting and implementation. Statistical data are included on 7 tables and 52 graphs. A glossary is appended. The following six appendices are included: (1) School-Based Case Management Middle Schools; (2) CBO Case Management Middle Schools; (3) Systemtic High Schools; (4) Modified Systemic High Schools; (5) Modified CBO High Schools; and (6) Pure CBO (Operation Success) High Schools. (FMW)

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# EVALUATION OF THE NEW YORK CITY DROPOUT PREVENTION INITIATIVE

## FINAL REPORT FOR YEAR ONE

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# Teachers College Dropout Prevention Program Evaluation

## 1985-86 Final Report

## Summary of Findings and Recommendations

The New York City Board of Education's Dropout Prevention Program (DPP) was implemented in 10 high schools and 29 middle schools in 1985-86. The Teachers College evaluation includes these schools and three high schools administered by the Attendance Improvement Dropout Prevention (AIDP) program.

Two models of service delivery were implemented in the middle schools, one that employed Board of Education personnel only (Project Connect), and another that employed personnel from both the Board of Education and community based organizations (CBO). In the high schools, four models were involved: a systemic model, which attempted to serve at-risk students by strengthening a school generally; a case-management model, which targeted services directly to selected at-risk students; a modified systemic model, and a modified case-management model, these mixing the two approaches in different proportions.

This summary addresses first implementation in the middle schools and high schools, and next individual, school, and model level student characteristics and outcomes. It should be clearly understood that because this is a report on findings from the first, implementation year of a three-year project, it would be utterly inappropriate to come to definitive conclusions at this time about the potential effectiveness of the programs being evaluated.

### Middle School Implementation

1. The middle-school Dropout Prevention Program was implemented in 1985-86 in 14 CBO schools, and in 15 Project Connect schools. Monitoring and support functions were carried out by the Office of Student Progress.

2. The DPP program components were implemented at different rates. Facilitation was implemented earliest in the year, and in 28 schools by the end of the year, followed by attendance outreach (29 schools), guidance and counseling (28 schools), health (12 schools), alternative education (21 schools), and school linkage (15 schools).

3. Recorded attendance outreach services to targeted students--mail, telephone calls, home visits, and conferences with parents--totaled more than 30,000 in all the middle schools combined. Recorded guidance and counseling services totaled more than 20,000 individual and group sessions. About 20,000

attendance outreach services were recorded by the 15 Project Connect schools, and about 10,000 by the 14 CBO schools. Approximately 10,000 guidance and counseling sessions were recorded by both the PC and the CBO schools.

4. Some of the community based organizations received contracts to work in the DPP schools several months after the school year began. This substantially affected the timing and extent of implementation of services in the CBO schools. Even after contracting, CBOs had to bankroll their expenditures until reimbursements were processed. The Board of Education has since appointed personnel to expedite contracting, but there still appear to be bureaucratic obstacles to timely implementation.

Recommendation: The Board of Education should interpret its role as one of facilitating the collaboration of community based organizations with the schools, rather than simply monitoring work contracted out to an alien organization.

5. Facilitation was actually undertaken both by facilitators and by CBO site supervisors. The effectiveness of a facilitator was dependent not only on the facilitator's effort, abilities, and other commitments in the school, but on the proactive support of the principal: in supervising the facilitator, explaining the program to staff, and promoting teachers' involvement with the program. This was the more true if a community based organization was involved in the program. The roles of the facilitator and the CBO site supervisor overlapped to some degree, yet each was answerable to a different organization. The principal sometimes fostered their collaboration.

More generally, in many schools the communication between school and CBO personnel involved in the DPP programs was very strained. Conflict occurred particularly around who was responsible for attendance monitoring and the scheduling or releasing of students for activity during the school day.

Recommendation: Principals themselves need to be communicated with by community school district and Office of Student Progress personnel, in meetings other than those focused on monitoring reports, to involve them in setting goals and solving problems in the Dropout Prevention Program. Principals should have regular meetings with facilitators, and, where relevant, CBO site supervisors, to help resolve issues and to formulate agendas for meetings of the school faculty and the project Pupil Personnel Committee.

6. Documented attendance services varied greatly from one school to another, though even in CBO schools some attendance outreach was carried out by the facilitator's staff before the CBO came on board. Home visits were singled out by school faculty as particularly valuable, but other tasks often competed with them for time. Obtaining daily attendance data from teachers was difficult in some schools, whereas in others it was facilitated by special systems.

Recommendation: Provide microcomputer capacity to all schools, to generate daily attendance lists and sublists with recent attendance history, phone numbers, etc. Make time available for home visiting.

7. Trips were valued by staff for the educational and developmental opportunities they afforded students, but these and other material incentives occasioned a lot of envy from students who were not in the program. Criteria for the award of incentives were not clearly understood in a number of schools.

Recommendation: Include non-targeted students on trips, and contribute DPP money for prizes to a school fund that will distribute educational prizes and certificates in a way that promotes the program's goals on a schoolwide basis.

8. Maintaining the extensive service records required by the Office of Student Progress was universally perceived as taking time away from services to students. Yet the potential of the records for providing project staff and the Pupil Personnel Committee with an overview of how services are being distributed to students with different attendance patterns is particularly evident from the revised forms for 1986-87.

Recommendation: Require the OSP monthly summary of service during alternate months of the school year, beginning in October, and encourage Pupil Personnel Committees to use the reports internally for monitoring and planning services in the schools.

9. Guidance and counseling services in one form or another were provided widely to DPP targeted students. Relatively informal counseling services probably outnumbered formal ones. In both Project Connect and CBO schools, students' access to the services of a professional who was officially qualified to give guidance or counseling varied greatly. Several of the CBOs built their program around counseling. However, the sharing of information between school and CBO staff was often problematic.

Recommendation: Targeted students' access to a guidance counselor, psychologist, social worker or SAPIS worker, as appropriate, should be established at the beginning of each year and then should be reviewed at intervals by the Pupil Personnel Committee. The Bureau of Child Guidance might be called upon to help a given school to solve problems, where necessary.

10. The health role of the DPP was basically to facilitate targeted students' utilization of the health services offered by the schools, but these services were themselves quite inadequate in some schools while strong in others. The biggest problem that the DPP staff can themselves help with is getting parents' permissions for health services and following up on whether students and their families are acting on referrals.

Recommendation: As health and attendance are so closely linked, health inquiries, including questions about permissions and referrals, might be made a regular part of the attendance outreach.

11. School linkage was weakly implemented in most of the schools. Only one of the zoned local high schools was really aggressive about recruiting DPP students, and middle school DPP staff had generally limited access to high schools outside their zones. A Parents Association in one school, and a CBO in one district, demonstrated that a third party may be effective in bridging the gap between the two systems of the middle schools and the high schools.

At least as important as the question of selecting a high school is the problem of transition to high school. This aspect of linkage seems to have received even less attention during the first year of implementation.

Recommendation: The Division of High Schools should take the lead in facilitating DPP students' access to high schools for selection and preparation for transition. The Chancellor's December 19, 1986 addendum to Special Circular No. 25 does address this need, but more time and resources will be required than the first due date for submission of plans recognizes.

Within the middle schools, with assistance at the district level, DPP staff should work with regular school staff to develop activities that anticipate transition to high school. There is a need to designate and fund someone within the school or CBO to be specifically responsible for linkage activities.

12. The type and level of alternative educational services provided in the DPP programs varied considerably. Some career education classes utilized small group processes, others used traditional classroom forms. Enterprise activities were alternately engaging and stereotyped. Some programs created appealing combinations of academic and recreational activities for after school, but many had problems recruiting teachers and attracting students after school.

A problem that is best seen in relation to alternative educational services is the question of students' re-entry to the classroom after a sustained absence, or indeed after only a few days. This presented serious difficulties for teachers as well as for the students, leading to the observation in a number of schools that teachers did not know how best to handle students who were brought back.

Recommendation: Workshops should be held next summer for DPP staff to exchange career education approaches and coordinate them with the framework OSP has promulgated.

For after-school activities, budget should be used in each school for a workshop or committee involving school faculty along with DPP/CBO staff, to plan activities that are both sound academically and attractive to staff and students. This same committee should address the re-entry question, making recommendations to teachers and DPP staff on how to help students and teachers re-connect academically. Any viable solution will probably entail some degree of individualized instruction, which DPP homework-help or other arrangements could facilitate. However, it is recognized that for many schools, individualized instruction would exceed present capacities, and that support would need to be forthcoming from community school districts or OSP.

## High School Implementation

13. The Dropout Prevention Program was implemented in 10 high schools, and supported by the office of the Assistant Superintendent for Dropout Prevention. Three high schools with programs funded and administered by the AIDP have been included in the evaluation for comparison. Facilitation was implemented earliest in the year, in 13 schools altogether by the end of the year, followed by attendance outreach (13 schools), guidance and counseling (13 schools), security (10 schools), alternative education (13 schools), school linkage (9 schools), and health (8 schools).

Unexpectedly, from the standpoint of the design, all 13 of the high schools in the evaluation worked with at least one CBO. As with the middle schools, late contracting and reimbursements resulted in startup delays, especially for programs that were more dependent on CBOs.

Recommendation: As long as there is an experimental effort to find out what contribution CBOs can make to schools, the Board of Education, again, needs to play an enabling role.

14. Overall, the relationship between the schools and the CBOs was more positive at the high school level than at the middle school level, reflecting in part the fact that high schools had a say in the selection of the CBOs working with them. Still, serious issues of coordination remained in many of the schools.

Recommendation: A current project of the Office of the Assistant Superintendent for Dropout Prevention to facilitate the relationship of the schools with the CBOs should be sustained and, if necessary, expanded.

15. More generally, the policy of giving the high schools more control over program than was given to the middle schools seems to have elicited more ownership of the DPP effort by the high school principals. The high school coordinators or facilitators as well received a lot of support from the DPP and AIDP central offices, which contributed to their initiative.

Recommendation: As implied in several of the recommendations for middle school implementation, give more control over program, and concomitant responsibility, to middle school principals and DPP staffs.

16. While some schools took a more systemic approach, still all schools used case management to some extent. Therefore, the sheer contrast of schools in one or another model will not answer questions about the relative effectiveness of case management vs. systemic strategies.

Recommendation: The Teachers College stratified sampling plan, together with the service logs at three times during the year, will be able to answer some general questions about the strategies. However, in each school the project staff should review the services being received by targeted students. CBO service logs and/or the Teachers College log should be utilized for this purpose. As some schools are exploring, a microcomputer could be adapted to internal monitoring of the distribution of services to students.

17. In 1985-86, there was ambiguity about the function of listing students for services in the high school programs. The high schools differed tremendously in how many students they listed. Systemic schools listed students to justify funding, but not necessarily to target services. The expectation in 1986-87 that all schools will make up a list of at least 100 students for targeted services clarifies the matter somewhat.

Whether the lists should contain long-term absentees was and continues to be an issue. Should the programs be saving LTAs? DPP and the CBOs were helpful in finding LTAs and/or referring them to appropriate educational services, but many LTAs were not found and this was seen as a waste of time.

Recommendation: As the issues here overlap with those in #13 above, so does the recommendation. The results of the evaluation and monitoring internally within the school should both be used to clarify the list questions.

18. Attendance outreach tended to be emphasized more by school personnel than by CBO personnel in the DPP high schools. Just how strongly it was implemented in the schools was a function of both the drive of the school for increased attendance and the technical training of the personnel.

The success of the attendance outreach also seemed to aided by students' being able to identify with the ethnicity, language, or social experience of DPP staff. Though this was remarked on at both the middle and the high school levels, it may have been more true in the more impersonal or adult context of the high school. At both the middle and the high school levels, family workers or family assistants hired by the Board of Education, and CBO staff more generally, were more likely to represent the nonwhite groups that constitute the majority of students in the DPP programs.

Recommendation: Racial/ethnic and language relatedness to students, technical skill, and administrative drive need to be integrated, if they are not already, to realize the full potential of a school's attendance outreach.

19. The DPP program increased counseling resources in all of the high schools. The CBOs particularly tended to organize their programs around counseling, encompassing a larger range of services than those which school guidance counselors ordinarily have the time or resources to provide. A major issue in some of the schools was coordination or overlap of CBO and regular services.

Recommendation: The coordination of services, including criteria and procedures for referral, needs to be reviewed in each school by the Pupil Personnel Committee.

20. Although two schools were exceptions, the high school personnel were generally dissatisfied with school level linkages, and tended to blame the middle schools for the problem. The middle schools, of course, were found to blame the high schools.

Recommendation: Again, the Division of High Schools should take the lead in facilitating DPP students' access to high schools. Familiarization with high school, and preparation for its demands, not just the selection of a particular high school, should be a high priority for linkage. This will probably entail cooperation between the borough superintendents and the community school districts, but the problem crosses borough lines.

21. Health was widely regarded as one of the weakest components of the DPP effort. Confusion about the role of DPP personnel and inadequate health resources were frequently cited.

Recommendation: The clearest role for DPP personnel is facilitation of students' permission, referrals, and follow-up for health services. As at the middle-school level, this might be closely tied to attendance outreach services. The health resources of the schools need to be reviewed by the Bureau of Health, and the cooperation of health, school, and CBO personnel may need to be facilitated at an administrative level by the Office of the Mayor. More funding may be needed to acomplish health goals.

22. DPP funded educational alternatives took many forms in the high schools, including curriculum development and teacher training for the regular instructional program, course enrichment activities, reorganization of students and staff into clusters or minischools, reduction of class size, special tutoring programs, transitional programs, job skills development, after-school activities, and p.m. schools. There were both substantive and structural aspects to many of these interventions.

Recommendation: These interventions are a key to answering the question, how will students' opportunities to succeed in school be enhanced once they have received other services to encourage them to return and/or to attend classes and program activities? The average rate of targeted students' passing courses in 1985-86 was not high enough to lead to graduation within a reasonable span of years. It might be that, whatever the level of the DPP investment in educational alternatives in a given school, it needs to be increased. In every school, regular academic courses and educational alternatives alike need to be reviewed from the standpoint of how they contribute to students' opportunities to complete their high school education.

23. The DPP high schools have taken various measures to strengthen school security. These include the installation of an automated entry system, hiring and equipping extra security personnel, and, in a few schools, training guards and students in mediation and conflict resolution techniques. In several schools, at least, security was recognized as linked to discipline and the students' images or perceptions of the climate of the school.

Recommendation: The image and climate of the school should continue to be a matter of active concern to the leadership of virtually every school, at both the middle and the high school level.

## Middle School Student Characteristics and Outcomes

24. A total of 4336 students were identified as middle school program participants. More than 93% of these were targeted in the fall of 1985. About 95% remained on the target list until the end of the 1985-86 school year. Almost one-half of the targeted group were eighth graders, about one-third were seventh graders, and about one-fifth were ninth graders. Less than one-half of one percent were either sixth or tenth graders.

25. Middle school students targeted for services appeared to be less at risk than targeted high school students, though this partly reflects the fact that attendance and achievement are generally higher in middle schools than in high schools. About one-fifth were absent less than 20 days in the 1984-85 school year, one-half of the students were absent 20 to 39 days in that year, and about one-third had been absent 40 or more days in the 1984-85 school year. Most students were passing more courses than they were failing at the time of program entry. About one-quarter of the middle school target group were failing three or more courses in 1984-85, but over 40% were failing one or no course at that time.

26. Most targeted middle school students were reported to be receiving dropout prevention services, and many of the target group were exposed to several types of service. Over 90% of the target group was reported as having received attendance outreach,

and over 80% as receiving guidance and counseling services. About three-quarters received attendance incentives, and about one-half career education and one-half health services. Nearly 40% were exposed to extended day programs. The lowest level of service delivery was for linkage programs, in which only about one-quarter of the students were reported to have participated.

27. Targeted students in some middle schools were more at risk than the targeted students in other middle schools. Some schools had target populations that averaged 25 days absent prior to program entry, while others had target populations averaging more than 40 days absent before entering the program. The variation in course performance was even larger, with students in some schools passing less than half of their courses prior to the program, on average, while students in other schools had passed more than 80% of their classes during that period.

28. The attendance of targeted middle school students fell about four percent during the program period. There is no equivalent control group with which to compare this change, but other data suggest that students at similar levels of risk in the same grades receiving no services would show declines in attendance at least as large.

29. Overall, targeted middle school students passed about 1.5% more of their courses during the program period than before. On average, the students are still highly at risk, but the data suggest that the program may have arrested the deterioration of grades that might have been expected without intervention.

30. There were sizable differences across schools in the changes observed in attendance, the proportion of subjects passed, and achievement. These differences appear to be largely artifactual, due to the differing levels of initial risk of the target groups across middle schools. Differences between the Project Connect and CBO models were generally quite small.

31. Targeted students' access to services varied somewhat by risk level. In general, the students least likely to receive services were the ones most at risk, according to prior attendance rates and the number of subjects failed prior to program entry. Those least at risk were most likely to receive services. The relationship between access to services and prior level of risk varied across services, and was frequently nonlinear.

32. There is some evidence that exposure to services had positive effects on student outcomes. A multivariate analysis, controlling for initial attendance, indicates that students receiving linkage and incentive services have slightly higher gains in attendance than students not receiving those services. The gains are not large, however, and it is not clear that these services in themselves would have caused a change in attendance. Better measures of the actual services delivered to students available in the 1986-87 school year will help unravel the

possible effects of dropout prevention services on student outcomes.

## High School Student Characteristics and Outcomes

33. A total of 6068 students were identified as high school program participants. Nearly 90% of these were listed for the program in the fall of 1985, and more than 95% remained on the lists until the end of the 1985-86 school year. Over half of the targeted group were ninth graders in 1985-86, about one-third were tenth graders, about one-tenth were eleventh graders, and a very small percent were twelfth graders.

34. Overall, the students targeted for the program were highly at risk. Almost one-quarter had been absent more than 80 days in the 1984-85 school year, and more than three-fifths were absent more than 40 days in that year. More than half of the targeted students had failed 5 or more courses during 1984-85, and more than 90% had failed at least two courses. More than 60% of the targeted students were over age for their grade. More than 60% were reading two or more years behind grade level.

Board of Education statistics showed that less than 10% of the targeted students had limited English proficiency, though student responses to the Teachers College survey indicated that a language other than English was spoken in a higher proportion of the homes of that sample.

35. Most students were eligible for the Dropout Prevention Program on more than one criterion, i. e., most students were multiply at risk.

36. Targeted students in some schools were substantially more at risk than in other schools. The schools differed in the level of targeted students' prior attendance, the level of courses failed the prior year, and so on. This reflected the exercise of different judgments about the selection of students, as well as the different demographics of the schools. At the same time, no school served students who were consistently better off than the targeted students in the other schools.

37. Between 1984-85 and 1985-86, there was a drop of attendance of 9.1% for the targeted high school students overall. The attendance of targeted nighth grade students declined by 10.3%, and among tenth through twelfth graders it declined by 7.7%. It has not yet been possible to identify a group of similarly at-risk students not in the Dropout Prevention Program or AIDP, but other data suggest that for such a population attendance could be expected to decrease by at least the amounts found here.

38. Overall, targeted students passed 4.8% fewer courses during the dropout prevention program than before entering it. There was a substantial difference across grade level, as ninth grade

participants passed 8.9% fewer courses, while tenth through twelfth graders passed the same number as before entering the program. These statistics may be even better than one would expect for the population without intervention. However, the average student in the program passed just two courses out of every six in 1985-86. At that rate, there is no way that the average student would accumulate enough credits to graduate from high school.

39. For most comparisons, student characteristics were unrelated to the apparent effect of program participation. That is, whether students were over age, behind in reading, male or female, or had limited English proficiency, did not make a significant difference to attendance or courses passed and failed.

40. Prior attendance and prior courses passed or failed did predict current attendance and current courses passed or failed. The students who were absent least in 1984-85 tended to be the ones whose absences increased the most in 1985-86, and those who had been absent most were the ones whose absences increased the least. Whereas targeted students who were absent less than 20 days in 1984-85 had the steepest decline in 1985-86 attendance, those who were absent 100 or more days in 1984-85 actually increased their 1985-86 attendance. A similar pattern emerged for courses passed or failed. These results clearly indicate a regression to the mean, that is, the students' attendance and grades tended to move toward the average for the sample between the one year and the next. Only a very powerful specification of program variables will be able to separate program effects from such a strong regression effect.

41. There were substantial differences among schools in attendance changes between 1984-85 and 1985-86 and in course credit changes between these years. Likewise, there were differences among models in these changes. These differences, however, were closely related to the differences in students who were targeted for these schools.

42. Data on services delivered to students in the different schools or models in 1985-86 are not available in a form that allows for a calculation of the impact of services on student outcomes. Data are being collected in 1986-87 to perform this analysis.

## Teachers College Survey Findings

43. As Teachers College had predicted, a low response rate was obtained to a survey administered in May and June, 1986. In the middle schools, 36% of the targeted students responded. In the high schools, the survey was completed by 42% of all the eligible students, but only 12% of the DPP targeted students.

44. At both the middle-school and the high-school levels, the students' responses to questions about services were basically

consistent with information that was obtained from staff interviews and reports.

45. Targeted students in both the middle schools and the high schools reported close and supportive relationships with their families. Targeted high school students were much more likely than non-targeted students to report living with only one parent.

46. There were no apparent differences between the different models in outcome variables--amount of voluntary absenteeism, school disruption, fighting, alienation--which might be affected by the programs. One assumes this is because the programs are just beginning, and because a one-time survey cannot easily identify improvements over the preceding year.

47. Targeted students generally did not participate in school sports teams or clubs compared to students in other cities. This suggests that there are fewer opportunities to participate in these activities in New York City schools.

48. The targeted students (those who were in the schools at this time of the year) reported generally positive feelings about their teachers and their schools.

## Middle School Program Costs

49. Total allocations for the first year middle school program were $4,450,000. Expenditures totalled $3,493,867. The CBO portion of this total was $1,082,287, while the school-based portion was $2,411,580.

50. Districts using CBOs spent approximately two-thirds of allocated funds, primarily due to late CBO startups.

## High School Program Costs

51. In spring 1985, the high school DPP program provided pilot start-up funds (averaging 1.5 units per school). These resources were used for coordination, para-professional assistance for identifying students, and start-ups with OTPS. This funding, along with programmatic support from central DPP and the provision of school persons' involvement in program planning, greatly helped the start-up process.

52. The high school program in 13 schools cost approximately $7,522,000. About half of this amount went to the CBOs, and half to the schools. Of the program components, alternative educational programs received the most funding (approximately $2,730,000). Guidance and counseling received the next largest amount (about $1,994,000). Very little funding was made directly available for DPP health services, although varying resources were otherwise available to the schools. Similarly, school level linkages were funded at a low level (approximately $41,000). Funding for school security totalled approximately $351,000, with

an additional $602,000 allocated for an automated attendance/entry system in the 10 DPP high schools. (Security continues to be a major concern in these schools, and the flexibility to try new approaches, including the use of conflict mediation services, is intended to produce reductions in crime and disruption.)

53. The provision of a base amount of funding for DPP schools (usually $150,000 but increased in some cases) gave schools the flexibility to purchase staff time and additional supplies and equipment. This helped schools avoid bureaucratic budgetary constraints and be more responsive to student and staff needs.

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# PREFACE

*This final report is the product of all members of the evaluation team at Teachers College. Specific sections of the report were authored as follows:*

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# INTRODUCTION

## Background

The New York City Board of Education, in cooperation with the Mayor's Office of Youth Services and the Office of Management and Budget, has developed a Dropout Prevention Program (DPP) to help the city's public schools retain students who are most at risk of dropping out. DPP, in concert with the state-sponsored Attendance Improvement/Dropout Prevention Program (AIDP) comprises the Dropout Prevention Initiative. A general goal of the Initiative has been to try new approaches toward preventing student dropout. To that end, the Initiative focuses on remedying attendance problems which are often precursors to dropping out, providing early interventions to middle school students, providing a comprehensive range of services to at-risk students, and involving communities and community-based organizations in dropout prevention. Nearly thirteen million dollars in state and city funding have been made available for the Initiative, which has been implemented in thirteen high schools and twenty-nine middle schools.

Ten of the high schools are under the leadership and supervision of Dr. Victor Herbert, the Assistant Superintendent for Dropout Prevention. The twenty-nine middle schools feed students into these ten high schools. Together, these thirty-nine schools comprise the Dropout Prevention Program. Three additional schools, part of the state-supported Attendance Improvement/Dropout Prevention program (AI/DP), are also part of the Initiative. The high school programs are expected to serve approximately 6,000 at-risk students each year, while the middle school programs will serve approximately 4,400 students yearly.

The Dropout Prevention Initiative has been organized as an experiment to test the effectiveness of different modes of service delivery. On the one hand, "systemic" services intended to affect the entire school environment and help all of a school's students are contrasted with case management services targeted for at-risk students. On the other hand, services provided by schools themselves are contrasted with services provided by community based organizations.

Using these approaches, the schools have been grouped into several different service delivery models. There are four high school models: a) pure systemic, in which services are directed toward changing the entire school environment (3 schools); b) modified systemic, in which some case management services are provided by CBOs (3 schools); c) modified CBO, in which case management services provided by community based organizations are augmented with some funding for systemic services (4 schools); and d) pure CBO, composed almost entirely of case management services (3 schools).

At the middle school level, all schools provide case management services for targeted at-risk students. In fourteen schools, services are provided by community based organizations contracted by the community school districts. Fifteen middle schools utilize personnel hired by the Board of Education to provide the same case management services through a program known as Project Connect.

Students targeted to receive Dropout Prevention Program services are 7th and 8th graders in intermediate schools, 8th and 9th graders in junior high schools, and 9th and 10th graders in high schools. The selection criteria for middle school students were the following:

-students who were absent 15 or more days in the spring of 1985 or 30 or more days during the 1984-85 school year;

-students who were considered to be at risk due to excessive lateness, course failures, low reading scores, or overage (one or more of these criteria can be used in schools unable to identify sufficient numbers of students based on absences).

High School selection criteria included:

-students absent 25 or more days during the spring term;

-students absent up to ten days in the current school year;

-students who had failed at least two courses in the spring of 1985.

The Dropout Prevention Initiative provides for the delivery of a range of services through six program components. These are:

(1) Program Facilitation. This component is designed to ensure that the progress of the program as a whole, as well as that of individual students in the program, is being monitored. Each school has a program facilitator or coordinator, and the planning and coordination of the different program elements are accomplished through a Pupil Personnel Committee.

(2) Attendance Outreach. Student attendance is monitored and followed up on through letters, phone contacts, and home visits. Incentives such as prizes, awards, or special activities are provided to encourage attendance improvement.

(3) Guidance and Counseling. Group, individual, and career guidance are provided to students, with the intent of addressing individual problems that may contribute to poor attendance.

(4) Health Services. This component consists of diagnostic

screening, including physical, psychological, and educational assessment, as well as appropriate referral services where necessary.

(5) School-Level Linkages. The goal of this component is to help middle school students make smooth transitions into high school. Activities include visiting high schools and engaging in a variety of activities with high school students and/or staff.

(6) Alternative Educational Programs. High interest educational programs that supplement regular instructional services are provided to students. These may include peer-tutoring and other methods of individualized instruction, extra-curricular activities related to career training, and recreational or cultural activities designed to encourage better attendance and improve achievement.

In addition (7), the ten DPP high schools included enhanced school security in their programs.

## Program evaluation

On April 1, 1986, the Institute for Urban and Minority Education at Teachers College, Columbia University, began a three-year evaluation of the Dropout Prevention Initiative, under a contract with the Board of Education. This document reports on the activities and findings of the first phase of the evaluation.

As stated in the Request for Proposals for the evaluation contract, the evaluation of the Dropout Prevention Initiative is designed to measure program effectiveness in terms of five general objectives:

a) the effectiveness of the Initiative in improving attendance and reducing dropouts in the schools overall and for targeted students in particular;

b) the relative effectiveness of the different models of service delivery;

c) the relative effectiveness of schools within each model;

d) the appropriateness of specific services for different types of students; and

e) the relative cost effectiveness of each serevice delivery model.

The first year data analyses included in this report specifically address degree of program implementation, descriptions of students served, and measures of program effectiveness (in terms of student attendance, academic progress, and attitudes).

The analysis of program implementation that is contained in various chapters of this report was built up through a very systematic process. First, in May and June, 1986, Teachers College evaluation staff conducted interviews with key staff of the DPP projects in each school: the principal, the facilitator or coordinator, the site supervisor if a CBO was involved, a school guidance counselor, project attendance outreach and counseling personnel, and various teachers, both those involved in the dropout prevention program and other teachers in the school. Higher level Board of Education officials were sources of information from the very beginning of the evaluation, and higher level CBO officers were interviewed during the summer and the fall. In the process of conducting these interviews, and also in the process of arranging for the administration of a Teachers College survey to students in the schools, a great deal of informal observation also took place.

All of these materials, together with monitoring reports that the Board of Education furnished to Teachers College, were used in writing a case study for each individual school. These cases were then collected for each of the two middle school models and the four high school models and analyzed for patterns of implementation. The resulting written analyses were next read and critiqued by the larger staff that had conducted the interviews in the schools, and were then rewritten as chapters for a first year Interim Report. Questions provoked by the Interim Report occasioned going back to the original interview material, or directly to the schools or CBOs, to obtain more information. The chapters were then rewritten for the Final Report, along with new chapters summarizing them.

At this stage, the evaluators carried out formal, quantitative analyses of program documentation in the monitoring reports and summaries of services that were available. The profiles of implementation that they yielded tended strongly to confirm the validity of the judgments that had resulted from the more qualitative observations and analyses that had been written up. Results from the quantitative analysis have been incorporated at several points in this report's chapters on implementation.

This Final Report first presents brief profiles of the schools which are part of the Dropout Prevention Initiative. Next, overviews of the implementation of the dropout prevention programs in middle schools and high schools are provided. These are meant to highlight the successes, problems, and critical issues which have emerged from the Initiative's first year. Following the sections on program implementation, the report continues with analyses of statistical data on individual characteristics (including attendance, courses passed, and standardized achievement test scores) and services received for middle school and high school students who were targeted for program services. Next, findings from the spring survey of students are presented, including data on student characteristics, attitudes toward school, and services received. This is followed by a report on budgets and expenditures for the Dropout Prevention Initiative's first year, and by a more extended discussion of first year evaluation activities. In a separate section of appendices, six substantive reports of program implementation by school level and model are provided.

# CHAPTER ONE
# PROFILES OF SCHOOLS IN THE DROPOUT PREVENTION INITIATIVE

This section summarizes descriptive information about schools provided by the Board of Education in School Profiles, 1985-86.

## HIGH SCHOOLS

Ten high schools were selected to participate in the Dropout Prevention Program: 1 in Queens, 3 in the Bronx, 5 in Brooklyn, and 1 in Manhattan. For the evaluation study, three AI/DP high schools were also included in the sample: 1 in the Bronx and 2 in Brooklyn.

### Attendance and Dropout

In all but one of the 13 schools, student attendance in 1985-86 was lower than the city-wide rate of 80.6%. Attendance ranged from a low of 65.3% to a high of 80.8%, with a mean attendance rate of 73.7 and a median of 73.9%. School drop-out rates for 1984-85 (reported in 85-86) varied from 6.3% to 26.1%, with a median of 13.6%.

### Enrollment

Overall 1985-86 enrollment in the 13 schools fell 1.8% to 36,899. Enrollment at individual schools ranged from 984 to 4026. Median enrollment was 2873. Despite the slight drop in enrollment, the schools remain quite full, with utilization rates ranging from 84% to 127%. Eight of the 13 schools had utilization rates exceeding 100%. Overall, the number of LTAs listed on register decreased from 2260 to 2183. However, only four schools had fewer LTAs in 1985-86 than in 1984-85, totalling 579 fewer LTAs among them. In the remaining nine schools, the total number of LTA's increased by 502.

### School Personnel

During the 1985-86 school year, 84.6 new teaching positions were added in the 13 schools. The student-teacher ratio was lowered from 28.8:1 in 1984-85, to 26.5:1 in 1985-86. School to school variation in teacher-student ratio ranged from 23:1 to 31:1.

The number of guidance counselors increased in 12 of the 13 high schools. In 1984-85, there were 51 guidance counselor positions, while in 1985-86, there were 74.6, an increase of 46.3%. This increase resulted in a decrease in the student-guidance counselor ratio, from 737:1 in 1984-85 to 495:1 in 1985-86. School to school variation in student-guidance counselor ratio ranged from 336:1 to 984:1.

### Language

LEP variation among the thirteen schools ranges from .4% to 23.3%, with a median of 10.3%. The range of students with a home language other than English extended from 11.8% to 75.1%, with a median of 53.9%.

### School Safety and Disruption

There was a slight increase in the suspension rate, from 63 per 1000 students in 1984-85 to 68 per 1000 students in 1985-86. During the same period, however, the number of reported serious incidents declined from 68 per 1000 students to 49 per 1000 students. In fact, every high school reported fewer incidents in 1985-86 than in 1984-85. But there is considerable variation among high schools in the ranges of both suspension rates (from a high of 138 per 1000 students to a low of 13). Some of this variation may be due to different enforcement or data reporting policies among the high schools, since some schools reported suspension rates as much as four times higher than their incident rates, while other schools had approximately the same suspension rates as incident rates.

Of the six schools which reported a decrease in suspensions, three had contracted with a CBO for conflict mediation services.

## MIDDLE SCHOOLS

Twenty-nine middle schools from ten community school districts participated in the 1985-86 Dropout Prevention Program. Both intermediate schools and junior high schools were included in the program.

### Enrollment and Attendance

There is considerable variation in middle school size. During the 1985-86 school year, registers in the 29 middle schools ranged from 650 to 1738, with a median enrollment of 900. Four schools had more than 1500 students. Fifteen schools had fewer than 1000 students.

Building utilization was quite varied, ranging from 48% to 131%. Two schools were under 50%, while two exceeded 100%. The median utilization rate was 74%.

Attendance from school to school in 1985-86 was fairly consistent at the middle school level, ranging from 77% to 88%, with a median of 81%.

### School Personnel

Student-teacher ratios varied markedly from school to school, ranging from 28:1 to 14:1, with a median of 17:1. Student-guidance counselor ratios varied even more considerably. One school close to median size had no guidance counselor. Two schools had student-guidance counselor ratios exceeding 1000:1, and seven more exceeded 650:1. Two schools, however, had ratios under 300:1.

Information about characteristics of students, implementation of programs, and outcomes, is profiled by school in subsequent chapters of the report.

# CHAPTER TWO
# COMPARISON OF MIDDLE SCHOOL DPP PROGRAMS: THE CBO AND PROJECT CONNECT MODELS

This chapter will attempt to make general, analytic comparisons of the middle school programs employing community based organizations (the CBO model) and those employing Board of Education personnel only (the Project Connect or PC model). For more detailed information about each model, Appendices 1 and 2, on the PC and CBO programs respectively, should be consulted. No attempt will be made here to make a particular school or CBO recognizable in the text. On the contrary, it is thought that anonymity will contribute to a more constructive use of feedback from the analysis. There will, however, be an effort to avoid overgeneralization, in order to appreciate the variations that occurred with respect to at least the more important aspects of the DPP implementations. In the final analysis, the twenty nine middle schools were all different from one another. This is even more true of the five principal community based organizations, which were organizationally separate from one another, spanned larger or smaller territories, emphasized different areas of service, and had longer or shorter histories.

At a program level of analysis, there seem to have been as many similarities as differences between the PC and CBO Dropout Prevention Programs in the middle schools, as this chapter will bring out. However, certain differences loomed very large in the schools' and the CBOs' perceptions and implementations of the programs, and these need to be set in perspective first. What will emerge from the analysis overall is that for many of the problems in the CBO schools, there were parallel problems in the non-CBO schools. To a certain extent, problems that were inherent in the Dropout Prevention Program generally may have been exacerbated by the differences between the schools and the CBOs. At the same time, some of these differences might be found, eventually, to give an advantage to the CBOs in their work directly with students. It is much too early to claim to understand these phenomena fully, but it is useful to try to make a preliminary formulation of them.

## Timing and extent of the implementation

The start-up of services occurred later in the year in some schools than in others, in both PC and CBO programs, but there was an overall tendency for the CBO programs to get underway later. Although the CBOs had been selected for DPP schools by September, 1985, contracting, and then hiring, stretched out between November and the following May. Some of the CBOs bankrolled the start-up from their available funds between the time a contract was awarded and the signing of the contract. Still, as late as April, 1986, some CBO programs were not fully staffed.

Using monitoring reports from the Office of Student Progress and the Office of Funded Programs, and findings from the Teachers College spring 1986 interviews, the timing of implementation was established for each component of the Dropout Prevention Program in each of the 29 schools. Implementation was defined as occurring when three-quarters of the staff for a given service had been hired, and services to students had actually begun.

Figure I-1 summarizes information on the implementation of the six principal DPP components in the 29 middle schools altogether. Facilitation was implemented during the first quarter of the 1985-86 school year in 23 of the schools, and in 28 of the schools by the end of the third quarter. Attendance outreach was implemented in 16 schools during the first quarter, and in all 29 schools by the end of the third quarter. Guidance and counseling was implemented in 17 schools during the first quarter, but in only 26 schools altogether. School linkage started later than any other service, being implemented in just 4 schools during the second quarter, and in 19 altogether. Health was implemented in 12 schools in the first quarter, and in 21 altogether. And alternative education was implemented in 8 schools during the first quarter, and in 21 altogether.

From a comparison of Figure I-2 for Project Connect schools, and Figure I-3 for CBO schools, it can be seen that implementation occurred later, on the average though certainly not in every case, in the CBO schools than in the Project Connect schools. A score was calculated for the overall implementation of a program in a given school, giving a 4 for implementation of a component in the first quarter, a 3 for implementation in the second quarter, and so on. The average implementation score for the CBO schools was 15, and the range was 8 to 20. The average score for the Project Connect schools was 17.2, while the range was 8 to 22.

All of the middle school DPP projects were required to submit monthly summaries of services to students to the Office of Student Progress, and by August 1986 all of the schools complied. The thoroughness and fidelity of reporting seems to have varied from one school to another, but it allows us to make certain crude observations. As expected, the sum of recorded attendance outreach contacts with the home--mail, phone, home visits, and conferences with parents at school--was larger for the 15 Project Connect schools than for the 14 CBO schools (about 30,000 compared with 20,000). On the other hand, the sum of individual and group counseling sessions recorded was almost the same for the schools in the two models, about 10,000 for each group of schools. The CBO number was as large as the PC number despite the fact that there was one less school and the schools generally got started later than the PC schools. This reflects what also emerged from the interviews of staff, that guidance and counseling played a central role in the approach of several CBOs.

Figure I-1

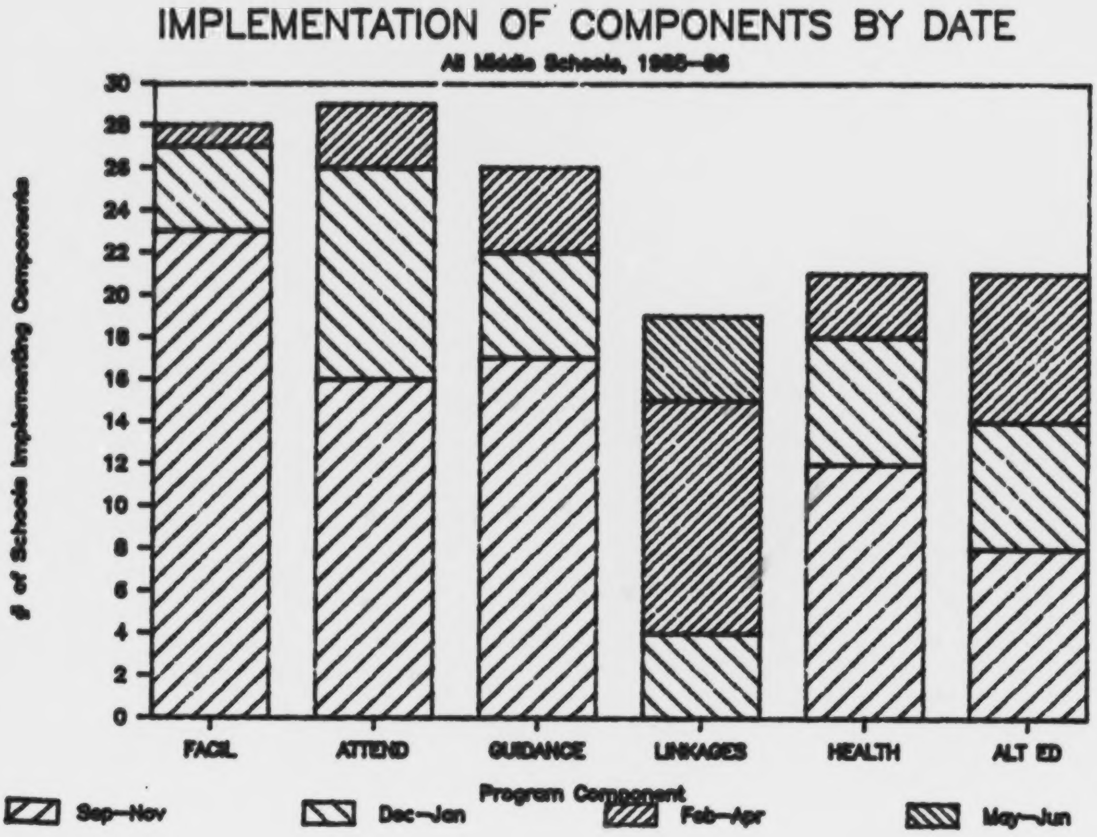

IMPLEMENTATION OF COMPONENTS BY DATE
All Middle Schools, 1985—86
# of Schools Implementing Components
0
2
4
6
8
10
12
14
16
18
20
22
24
26
28
30
FACIL
ATTEND
GUIDANCE
LINKAGES
HEALTH
ALT ED
Program Component
Sep—Nov
Dec—Jan
Feb—Apr
May—Jun

Figure I-2

IMPLEMENTATION OF COMPONENTS BY DATE

School-based Middle Schools, 1985–86

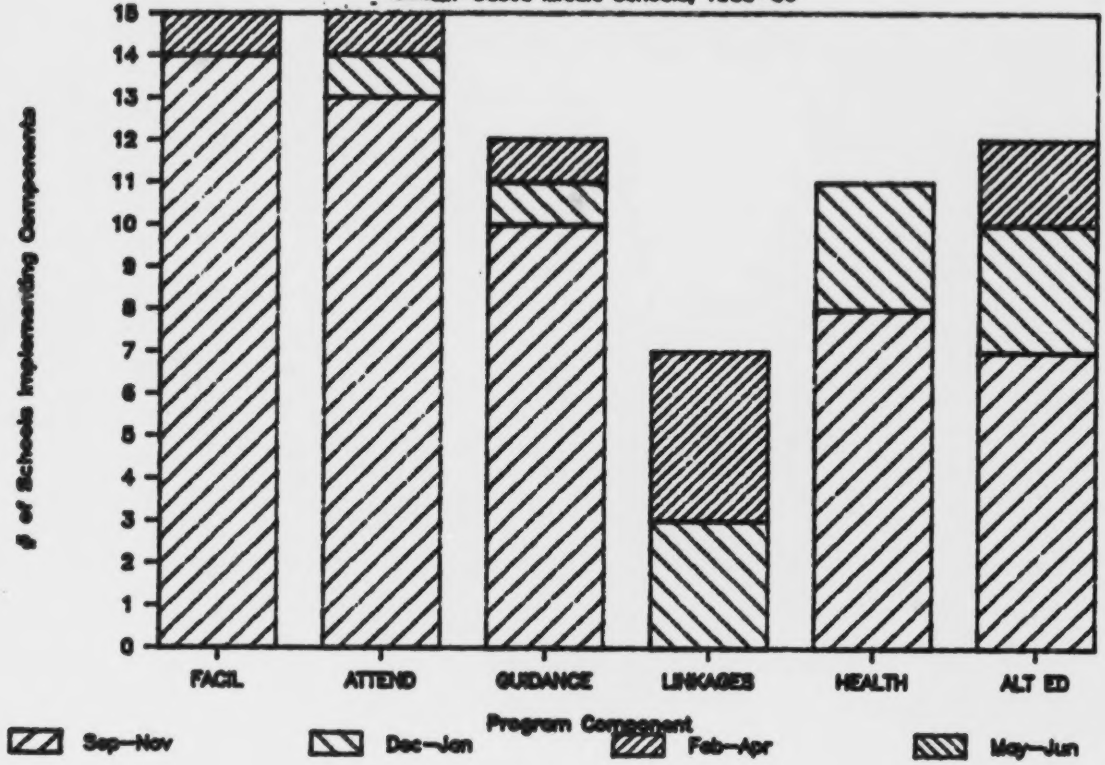


Figure I-3

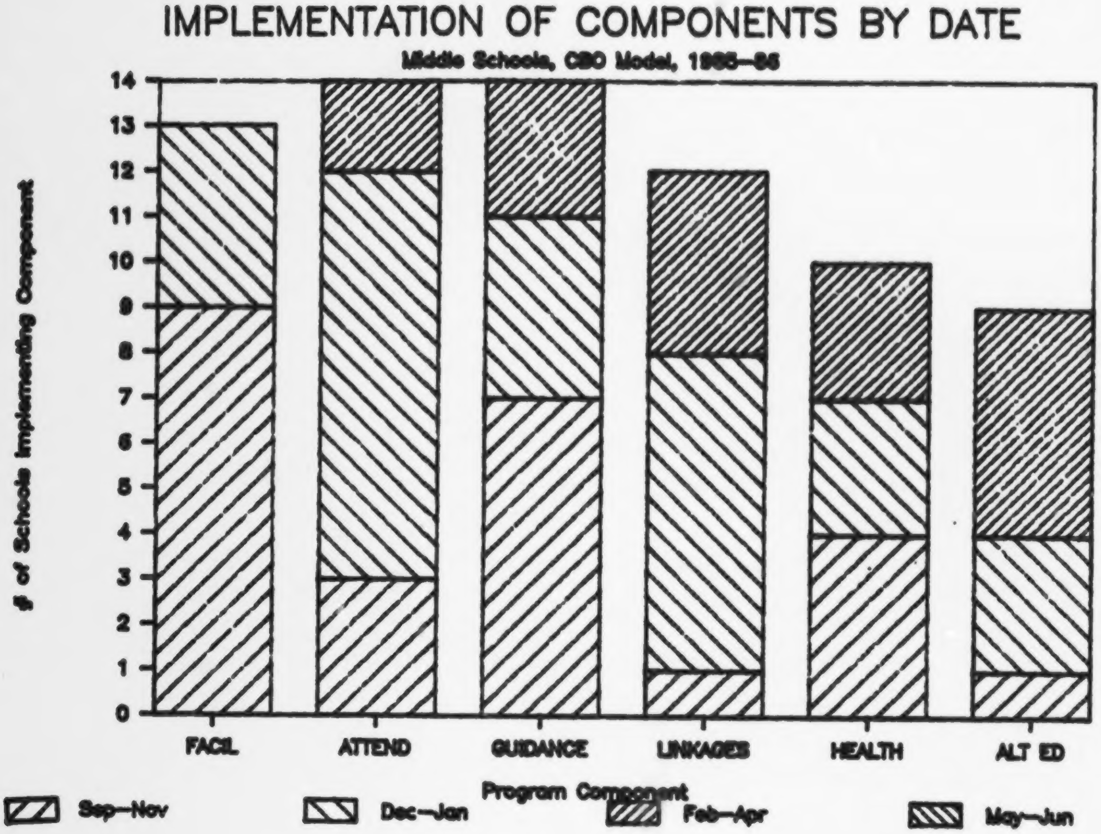

IMPLEMENTATION OF COMPONENTS BY DATE
Middle Schools, CBO Model, 1985-86
# of Schools Implementing Component
0
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
FACIL
ATTEND
GUIDANCE
LINKAGES
HEALTH
ALT ED
Program Component
Sep-Nov
Dec-Jan
Feb-Apr
May-Jun

Figure I-4

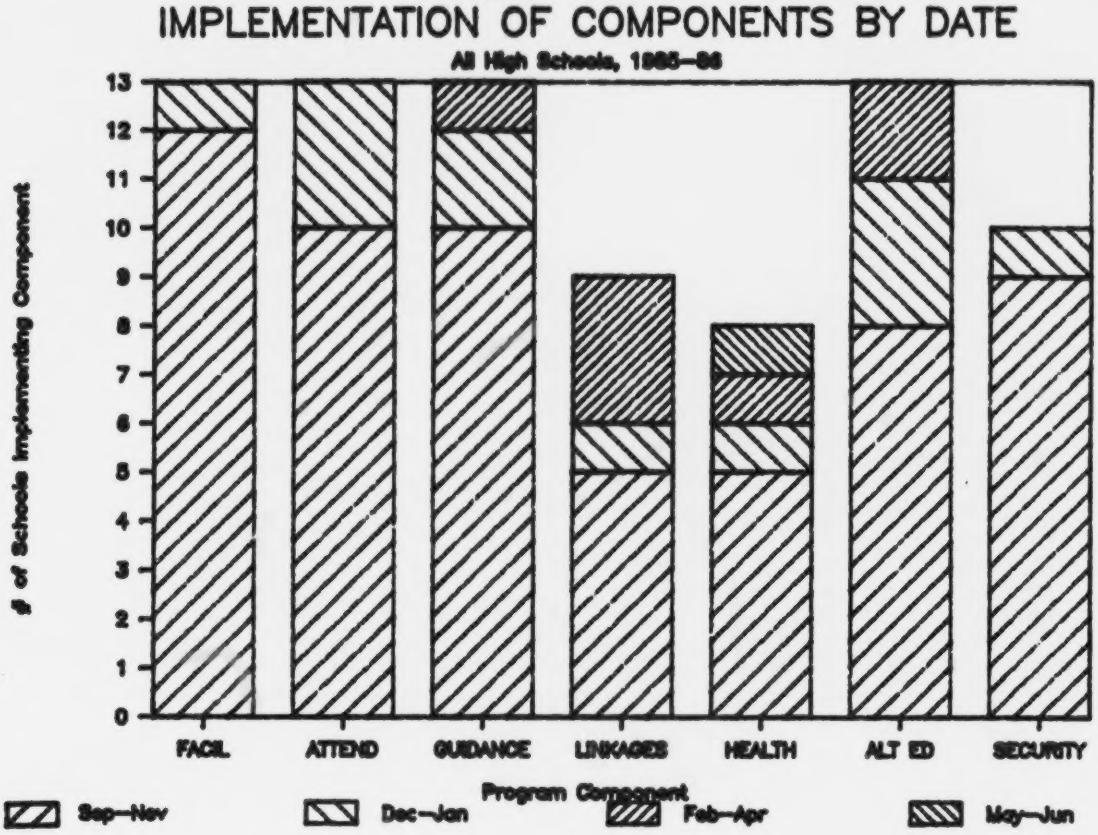

IMPLEMENTATION OF COMPONENTS BY DATE
All High Schools, 1985-86
# of Schools Implementing Component
0
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
FACIL
ATTEND
GUIDANCE
LINKAGES
HEALTH
ALT ED
SECURITY
Program Component
Sep-Nov
Dec-Jan
Feb-Apr
May-Jun

Figure I-5

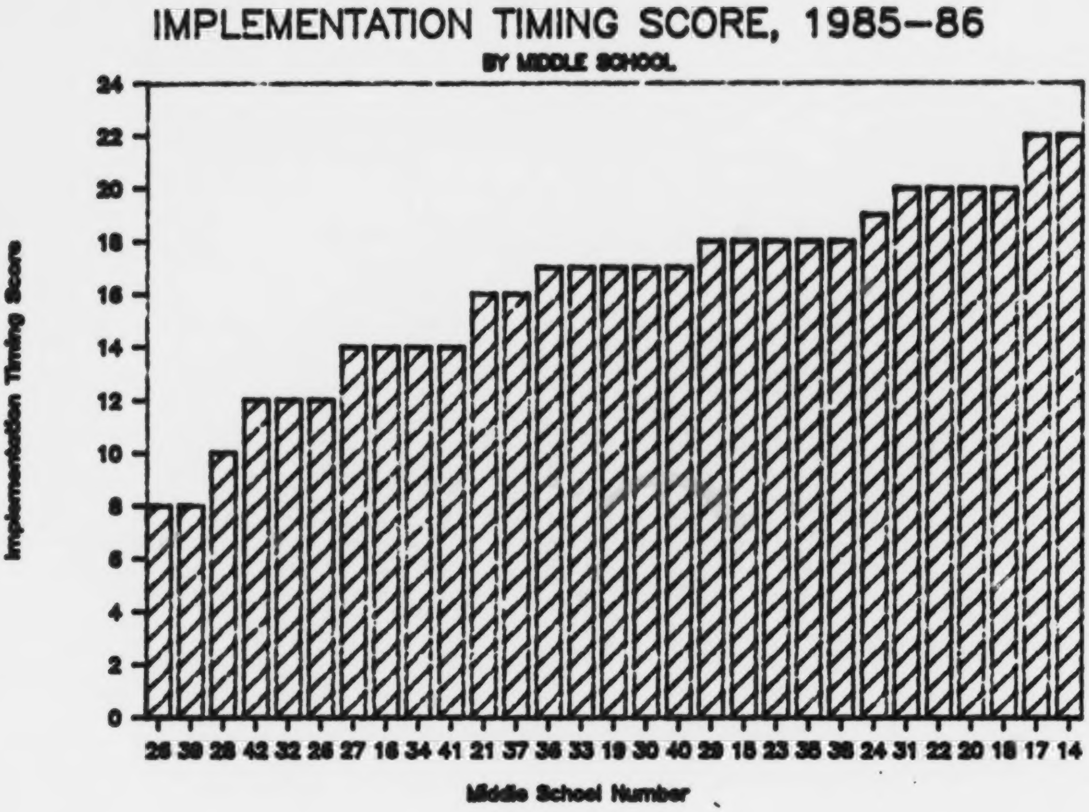
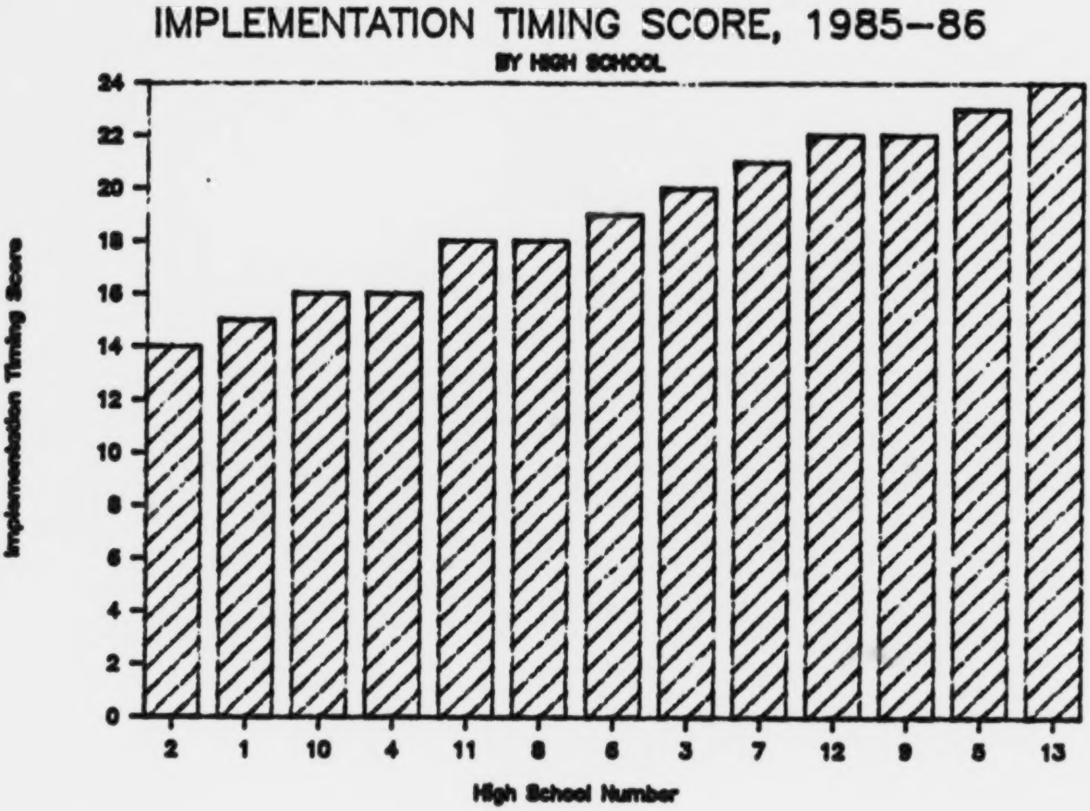

IMPLEMENTATION TIMING SCORE, 1985-86
BY MIDDLE SCHOOL
Implementation Timing Score
0
2
4
6
8
10
12
14
16
18
20
22
24
25 39 28 42 32 26 27 16 34 41 21 37 36 33 19 30 40 29 15 23 35 38 24 31 22 20 18 17 14
Middle School Number

Figure I-6


IMPLEMENTATION TIMING SCORE, 1985-86
BY HIGH SCHOOL
Implementation Timing Score
0
2
4
6
8
10
12
14
16
18
20
22
24
2
1
10
4
11
8
6
3
7
12
9
5
13
High School Number

## Personnel of the DPP staffs

Another factor in the later staffing of the CBOs was the attempt by some especially to find staff with certain attributes, for example, Hispanics who were bilingual. A few similar cases involved the late hiring of staff in PC schools.

Once in place, the staffs of the PC and CBO programs were similar up to a certain point, but then diverged. The facilitators in both the PC and the CBO schools were usually teachers, though in a few cases in both sets of schools they were administrators or counselors, or teachers with some adminstrative and/or counseling training. In both the PC and the CBO schools, a few of the facilitators were ethnic minority, but most of the facilitators were ethnic majority.

All of the CBO site supervisors had bachelors or masters degrees, but otherwise their educational backgrounds were very diverse. Not more than two appeared to be former teachers. Half of the site supervisors were ethnic minority.

Some case managers or group leaders--a step down in the CBO hierarchy--had completed college degrees, while others were working on their degrees. Nearly all of these personnel were ethnic minority.

Family workers, as they were called in the PC schools, or family assistants and outreach workers, as they were called in the CBO schools, all had completed high school or the GED, and some were working on college degrees. The family workers or assistants were almost exclusively ethnic minority.

In both the PC and CBO schools there was considerable variation with respect to staffing for guidance counseling. The variations included securing the part-time use of a guidance counselor already on the school staff, hiring a special guidance counselor or a SAPIS (substance abuse prevention) worker, or having no special access to a guidance counselor. Virtually all of the guidance counselors were of majority ethnicity, though a SAPIS worker was more likely to be of minority ethnicity.

The staffing of the educational alternatives programs was extremely variable, but certain large patterns can be identified. In the PC programs, these activities were staffed almost entirely by school personnel. First of all, the facilitator in all but one of the PC programs also conducted the career education and enterprise activities, sometimes with the participation of another teacher in the enterprises. With a few significant exceptions--for example, an after-school medical club that made rounds at a local hospital--almost all of the before-school and after-school activities were carried out by teachers. In the CBO programs, teachers were employed for some of the educational alternative programs, heavily so in a few schools, but the overall tendency was to rely more on the CBOs' own resources and on persons from the community, in crafts, business, and so on.

It was not claimed in the schools that sheer racial identity was a determining factor in the success of staff relationships with students, and, in fact, some very positive cross-racial interactions between staff and students were observed. However, bilingualism was often said to be important, and so was shared social experience, or staff's having faced some of the same economic and social obstacles that confronted most of the students. The family workers in the PC programs were particularly valued by the other staff of their schools for their relationships to the students and their outreach to families. In the CBO programs, their counterparts were the family assistants and outreach workers, but then in addition, as shown above, there was a greater likelihood in the CBOs that other staff as well had cultural ties with the students. In almost all of the CBO schools, CBO staff were regarded by school staff as having positive relationships with the students.

CBO staff's not being teachers was another potential factor in their relationships to students. It was stated in some schools that because the CBO staff were not part of the regular school staff, they were able to gain the trust and confidence of the students and build rapport. There was also a feeling in some, however, that the CBO staff were too close or peer-like in their relationships with students. In some schools, the CBOs were perceived as not respecting school culture, particularly in taking students out of classes. The CBOs were indeed oriented more to one-on-one and small group relationships, in contrast to teachers' orientation, necessarily, more to whole classes. On the other hand, pull-outs were also a cause of friction between DPP staff and other teachers in the PC programs, so perhaps CBO staff not being teachers amplified a difficulty that was already inherent in the program.

It could not be assumed that the CBOs and the schools would enjoy an easy partnership. However, certain additional factors in the way the Dropout Prevention Program was established may have made it still more problematic. One, to be discussed below, was a certain ambiguity in the role of the facilitator, which had consequences for both the PC and the CBO programs. Another factor was the imposition of the DPP on the schools from the top down, which affected the involvement of principals in both PC and CBO schools, but was compounded by the principals of the CBO schools not having a say in the selection of the CBOs. Third, the decentralization of the community school districts, and the history of confrontational school politics in the districts, has created a more volatile medium for the DPP at the middle school level than at the high school level. This may be the level at which school and community partnerships can best be forged, but it requires tremendous energy from all sides.

## Identification of targeted students

In both the PC and the CBO schools, the facilitator played the key role in making up the list of students eligible for participation in the program. The CBO was involved in a few of the CBO schools, but the initial task had been completed by the time most were able to enter the schools. In both sets of schools this was characterized as a cumbersome process in the initial phases, which entailed scrutinizing the records of all of the students on the targeted grade levels. Again in both sets of schools, there were more eligible students in some schools than in others, with the result that there was greater latitude of criteria exercised where more students were needed to fill the lists. In both PC and CBO programs, some schools included on the list students whose excessive absence could be accounted for in terms of illness or family vacation. Staff in both sets of schools argued for more flexible criteria for students' eligibility. The lists were refined throughout the year in both PC and CBO schools, but this may have occurred somewhat more in the latter. There were cases of noneligible students participating in DPP activities in both PC and CBO schools. In some of the PC schools, students not on the list were needed to sustain some of the after-school activities. The majority of the CBOs felt that they should not deny service to any needy student. At least one CBO was open to non-DPP students for counseling on a walk-in basis, and a couple of centers maintained after school by CBOs had already been open to a broader segment of the community before the onset of services to DPP students.

## Program facilitation

The facilitator's role called for continual monitoring, coordinating, and reporting. However, the task of facilitation was larger than the role of the facilitator alone, and other personnel, particularly the site supervisors in the CBO programs, carried out some of the functions of facilitating.

Whether or not the facilitators worked full time for the DPP, as they did in handling career education in the PC schools, they strongly felt that the facilitation component as such called for much more time than the .4 time allotted to it. Virtually all felt that the job required too much paperwork. In the PC schools, this was seen as cutting down on the time they had for working directly with students. In a few of the CBO schools, on the other hand, the paperwork may have been used to justify the facilitators' disengagement from CBO activities. These stances differently reflect one of the ambiguities of the position, which the Office of Student Progress defined as being basically a managerial job, but which the principals apparently interpreted more in terms of service to the students, at least in the case of a number of facilitators who were clearly selected for their orientation to students.

From the standpoint of the Office of Student Progress, what was characterized by facilitators and family workers as "paperwork" was a documentation of services to students. OSP used monthly reports of services to review the distribution of services with facilitators and, in some cases, principals and even district superintendents. A particularly important function of theses reports was said to be the possibility of the Pupil Personnel Committee's conducting its own in-house review of the level of services students were getting, and which students were receiving services.

In the CBO schools, various negotiations and arrangements inevitably had to be undertaken by CBO personnel themselves. The site supervisor had the most authority with his or her own staff to do this, but case managers or group leaders often had to initiate a room arrangement, a request for information from teachers, or the like. Facilitation was most difficult in schools where the facilitators themselves withdrew from the role in one way or another, and/or where the CBO site supervisors could not be in the school full-time due to supervisory duties in other schools. Not only did the facilitators not have authority over the remaining CBO staff, but case managers or group leaders did not necessarily have this authority. As was also true for facilitators, site supervisors who had more administrative experience seemed to be more effective.

In both the PC and the CBO programs, many of the facilitators felt that their status was anomalous. They felt they were neither teachers nor administrators in the eyes of their colleagues. In the PC schools, this made it more difficult for the facilitators to get teachers' rollbooks, to arrange student pull-outs, and to involve other teachers in the program. It set the facilitators up for staff envy of their not teaching and of their controlling incentives. In the CBO schools, the anomaly was heightened by the ambiguity of a "facilitator"'s relationship to a "site supervisor". From the words alone, one would not surmise that the CBO head in the school was in any way answerable to the school's DPP head. Indeed, the CBOs saw themselves as autonomous entities. Yet the facilitator was, at the least, responsible for obtaining information from the CBO to submit to the Board of Education. The CBOs' traditions of maintaining confidentiality of information on the population served were invoked to justify not giving facilitators access to CBO records in a number of cases. When the CBO needed the facilitator to help obtain rollbooks or arrange alternative education activities with teachers, this put the facilitator in a double bind. Generally, the facilitators were not strong advocates of the CBOs. That the working relationships were improved in perhaps half of the CBO schools over the course of the year was a tribute to efforts of both the facilitators and the site supervisors in those schools. Where this was not the case, the intransigence or lack of skill or will of either party might have been involved in one combination or another. But piling in on top of these more individual factors were the larger differences between the personnel of the CBOs and the schools.

At least one community school district in both the PC and the CBO models played a major role in resolving role conflicts among DPP staff, but others were said to have taken a more laissez faire approach, particularly toward the conflicts between school and CBO personnel.

In both the PC and the CBO schools, the role of the principal seems to have been crucial in the resolution of the facilitator's problems, or the failure to resolve them. In most of the schools, the principals appear to have been relatively inactive. Their confidence in the facilitator could be characterized as benign neglect. In a few, the principals gave both supervision and support: setting expectations for the facilitator, explaining the program to staff, and promoting teachers' involvement with the program. As noted at the outset, principals felt that they themselves had not been consulted in the planning of the program, and this was probably a factor in their involvement.

The Pupil Personnel Committee proved to be a valuable instrument for communication and problem solving in some of the schools of both models. All of the PC schools reported having Pupil Personnel Committees. A variety of tasks were described as having been accomplished by a majority of the committees. However, the committee seems to have been a formality in a few of the schools. Nine of the CBO schools had active Pupil Personnel Committees, and in some cases the committees were reported to have helped integrate the CBO into the school. In the two schools which openly declared that they had no PPC, the CBO and the school were observed to have substantial unresolved conflicts.

## Attendance outreach

Monitoring the students' attendance required cooperation between the monitor(s) and the school staff. Some programs in both models worked out more efficient ways to do the job than others, for example, having the teachers take attendance on separate sheets for targeted students rather than just in their rollbooks alone. In the CBO schools, however, the question of who should monitor the students' attendance, CBO staff or school staff, was ambiguous, and there were complaints on both sides in some schools that the other party was not doing his or her job. In most of the CBO schools, outreach staff felt that they were not getting the attendance information they needed on time.

In some of the CBO schools, not only family assistants but also case managers or group leaders visited students' homes. Home visiting was the most widely appreciated component of the DPP program in the schools of both models. It is clear that more home visiting was accomplished in some schools than in others, in both models. The amount of paperwork that staff had to do was the most frequently cited obstacle to home visiting. However, this was presumably more of a constant across the schools, so that in itself it does not account for the variation among schools in home visiting. In both sets of schools, there were one or two schools where it was clear that the attendance outreach was inadequately staffed and carried out.

TELSOL systems were operating in some of the schools of both models. There were in each model several schools where wake-up calls or some other form of early morning contact was in place, which seemed to be particularly effective with students. Many teachers in both sets of schools especially apppreciated the outreach efforts of the project. However, some teachers in the schools were at a loss for what to do with some of the students who were brought back, and there was no provision in the schools of either model for students who were brought back in from long term absences.

Many non-DPP staff in both the PC and the CBO schools questioned the impact of the program incentives--material awards, trips, and recognitions--in two ways. First, the distribution of trips and prizes was thought to be rewarding students for their previously not having come to school. Second, it was thought to be unfair to those students whose attendance was already good, and students who were not in the program were often reported to be jealous of the students who were. In both models, the programs varied in the explicitness and strictness of their criteria for the incentives. In the PC schools, teachers were found to be jealous or scornful of the largesse of the program, while in one of the CBO schools, there was suspicion as to how the CBO was spending the incentive money. In both sets of schools, the procedures of spending the money were said to be very frustrating for DPP staff. Counterbalancing all of these problems is the impression that the trips were especially valued by many of the students, and that they presented staff with special opportunities for students' personal and social development and cultural expansion.

### Guidance and counseling

Officially, only the counseling offered by certified guidance counselors, SAPIS workers, licensed psychologists, or social workers can be regarded as "guidance" or "counseling" in the city schools. Students' opportunities for this counseling varied greatly among both the PC and the CBO schools, in proportion to both the assignment of counselors directly to the DPP program and the more general accessibility of a school's counselors to students in the program.

In the PC programs, a great deal of advising, support, or mentoring took place through the contacts that the facilitators had with students in the career education or enterprise activities and on trips, and through the contacts the family workers had with students. In a few schools, mentoring was accomplished in conjunction with extended day activities. In the CBO programs, there were parallel transactions with students, but in addition, counseling was central to the definition of the roles of the case managers or group leaders. Albeit, these staff were not licensed counselors, and some of their work overlapped in nature with the work of DPP staff in both programs more generally. The more formal counseling activities included individual counseling and parent/student sessions, student/teacher sessions, and groups with a focus on values clarification, personal adjustment, or vocational exploration. For some of the students, these sessions were an outcome of intake interviews to assess students' needs and vocational interests. Less formal contacts occurred through student walk-ins to the CBO office, encounters in hallways or other such settings, and home visits.

Non-DPP staff in most of the CBO schools were pleased with the fact that students were receiving supplementary counseling services, or with the personal contact the students were getting. However, some perceived the pull-out sessions as an interruption of the students' classroom attendance, and suspected that some students were requesting counseling in order to get out of the classroom. Pull-outs were also objected to in the PC schools, but it appears that they were scheduled more regularly in the PC schools, generally for career education or enterprises, and only during minor subjects.

The space available for counseling varied greatly in both the PC and the CBO schools, some programs enjoying excellent space, and others having to utilize space that was too crowded for privacy.

### School level linkages

In both the PC and CBO schools, linkages with the local zoned high school were generally regarded as unsuccessful. There were exceptions to this in both sets of schools, for example, one high school's bringing former graduates to feeder middle schools to answer questions, and a middle school's conducting joint PTA meetings with the recipient high school. However, relatively few students in any of the middle schools were said to have elected the zoned high school. Nor did it appear that the students' familiarization with a high school had been sufficient in most cases to ease their transition to high school in the fall. In both sets of schools, the students were said to hold very negative images of the zoned high schools, and the high schools, with some exceptions, were alleged to be unresponsive to the middle schools or the targeted students. The RFP for the CBOs clearly required them to conduct linkage activities, as did the Chancellor's Circular for the PC programs. The failure of this component was attributed in some of the CBO schools to the ambiguity of who was responsible for it, or to a low priority on the part of the CBOs. Given the parallel failure in the PC schools, however, the paramount reasons seem to have been more the students' and the schools' orientations, and perhaps overriding this, the loose coupling of the middle schools and the high schools in the New York City system, in which these schools came under different administrations. One of the CBOs, in fact, attempted to capitalize on its having projects in a number of schools to mount a more coordinated attack on the problem. It might be that the CBOs and the community school districts need to do this in concert.

## Health services

*The health services for targeted students appeared to be* quite different among the PC schools, as a function of several variables. First, whereas some schools articulated health goals more or less clearly, program staff and/or principals in several schools said that the idea of this component was not clear to them, or indeed that no DPP health component was intended. Second, the regular health resources of the schools varied tremendously, from there being no health coordinator on a regular basis, to a school's having made health a top priority and secured extra resources for all of its students. Third, the facilitators themselves had different priorities for health, and/or different resources for responding to these priorities.

In the CBO schools, health was specified as one of the areas to be included in case management, and all of the programs were said to make referrals regularly to the health resource coordinator and/or outside medical services and mental health agencies. The regular health resources of the CBO schools varied almost as much as those of the PC schools. Again there were several schools that did not have a health resource coordinator. On the other hand, the health coordinator in two schools was developing an emphasis, with support from the CBO, on training students to be intelligent consumers of health resources; and in another district, the CBO participated in a schoolwide program on teen pregnancy. It was claimed that most of the CBO schools developed a systematic way for insuring that DPP students received priority over the total school population in terms of health services.

## Alternative educational programs

Both the PC and the CBO programs offered academic, career or vocational, enrichment, and recreational activities. In both sets of schools, these activities got underway earlier in some schools than in others, but the delays tended to be greater in the CBO schools, reflecting the general delays of contracting alluded to before. As observed before, the PC programs tended to utilize school staff almost exclusively for these activities, while both school and CBO or outside personnel were employed by the CBO programs. The emphasis on tutoring in reading and mathematics was actually at least as strong in the CBO alternative education activities as in the PC alternatives. The enterprise activities do not seem to have been developed as much in the CBO programs as in the PC programs. In both models, school staff outside the program tended to fault the nonacademic educational alternatives as not being what the students needed most to succeed in school. A question that stems from issues in several of the areas of service in the DPP is whether students at risk are best served by activities and relationships that are experienced as alternatives to conventional schooling, or by experiences that reinforce engagement in conventional schooling.

These are not necessarily contradictory positions, but they might be found to be. Forthcoming evaluation analyses may be able to shed light on this question.

Conducting activities during after-school hours presented problems for both the PC and the CBO schools. Delays in obtaining materials were problems for some schools in both models. Some programs in both models had to arrange security after 4 PM, for example one PC program's utilizing high school mentors as guards, and a CBOs employing a private security guard, until this became too costly. Attracting DPP students to after-school academic activities, or getting DPP parents' permission for these activities, proved to be difficult in a number of schools in both models. One strategy that evolved in both was the linking of academic and recreational activities (which, for the PC programs, may now be ruled out in 1986-87).
About two-thirds of the PC schools conducted alternative education activities before school, sometimes in conjunction with breakfast. CBOs do not appear to have conducted before-school activities. On the other hand, CBOs were more likely to maintain, at the school site or elsewhere, a center that offered services to both DPP and non-DPP clients after school.

## Conclusion

A Dropout Prevention Program framework was definitely in place in all of the schools. In both models, it was possible to find each service component well implemented in one school or another. Likewise, a failure to implement was observable for each component at one school or another in both models. This is not a trivial finding, for it points to the possibility of cutting across the models to find out how different services contribute to students' staying in or dropping out of school.

To pursue such an analysis further, both quantitative and qualitative data will be required. The monthly service reports submitted by the facilitators to the Office of Student Progress in 1985-86 have been summarized by school, but are available for individual students only on a one-time basis (did or did not receive service in each category). Some analyses with the data available are reported in Chapter 4. Furthermore, information on services in 1986-87 will be considerably more useful, because of the earlier start-up of services in this second year.

The actual process of delivering services was observed only casually in some instances in 1985-86, and not at all in others. This was due to the evaluation's beginning very late in the school year. It will be important for the evaluation to have access to the actual workings of attendance outreach, counseling, school linkage, and so on, in order to be able to document effective delivery of services, and to identify problems of implementation more at first hand.

From reading the separate chapters on the PC and CBO models, in the evaluation project's Interim Report or in the appendices of this Final Report, one might conclude that various problems were peculiar to the model in question. This analysis across the models, however, has revealed that most of the problems in one model had their counterpart in the other. Fundamentally, these were the problems of implementing the general Dropout Prevention Program in the middle schools by either model. Amplifying these problems were the difficulties of introducing community agents into the school, via the CBO model, vs. using school personnel only, via the PC model. Overall, the CBO model clearly entailed more tension and perhaps outright failure of relationships between the program and the school. But this is a very short-run observation, and does not take account at all of possible gains to students through the model when it is fully implemented.

In both models, there were schools where outside staff who knew about the program thought it was having a positive effect on students, and other schools where staff thought it was having little positive effect. Principals made strong statements in one direction or another for both of the models. It was in every way a classic first, start-up year of a large school program. The second and third years should throw much more light on the impact of the program on the students and their schools.

# CHAPTER THREE
# IMPLEMENTATION OF DROPOUT PREVENTION PROGRAMS IN HIGH SCHOOLS

This section analyzes findings on the first-year implementation of the Dropout Prevention Initiative in thirteen high schools. More detailed descriptions of findings, organized by program model, are located in Appendices 3-6. As the following discussions indicate, the Initiative's start-up year was characterized by a number of strong efforts to provide new services for students, along with some problems or slow starts in organizing and delivering program components. Many findings can be considered typical for the early stages of a complex program, while others may reflect possible strengths or weaknesses in the program's design and its fit with the needs of particular schools and students.

## Timing and extent of program implementation

In order to assess the timing of program implementation, we defined the start-up date of each program component (attendance outreach, guidance and counseling, etc.) as the date when three-quarters of the staff had been hired and at least three-quarters of the program activities had actually begun. Figure I-4 shows how schools fared in beginning the delivery of services. Facilitation was implemented in 12 of the 13 high schools by the end of the first quarter of the 1985-86 school year, and in all schools by the second quarter. All schools had also implemented attendance outreach services by the second quarter, and guidance and counseling and alternative education programs were begun in all schools by the third quarter. Health services were begun in only five schools during the first quarter, and in only 8 schools by the end of the year. Similarly, school level linkages were not implemented in all schools; five schools began services during the first quarter, one in the second quarter, and three in the third quarter of the school year. Nine of the ten DPP high schools implemented program services related to school security in the first school quarter and the last school began these services in the second quarter; this program component did not apply to the three AIDP high schools.

Scores were calculated for overall program implementation by adding together a point value of 4 for each service component implemented in the first quarter, 3 for components implemented in the second quarter, and so on. (Security was not factored into this scale, since it was not part of the AIDP/pure-CBO program model.) The average implementation score for all high schools was 19 points, with a range of 14 to 24. In general, the systemic and pure CBO model schools scored lower on this implementation scale than schools in the other two program models. It should be noted that this scale was an attempt to measure the timing of implementation, but did not address questions about the quantity or quality of program services.

## Schools' commitment to dropout prevention programs

Before the Dropout Prevention Initiative began, each of the thirteen high schools was well aware that, for one reason or another, it had serious problems with student attendance and dropout rates. Pressure from parents and the public, the media, the state education department, and the New York City Board of Education was being exerted on the schools, and although in some cases the school administrations disagreed with others' assessments of why attendance and achievement were low and students were leaving school in record numbers, it was fairly clear that some new solutions were needed. For the ten high schools selected to be part of the Dropout Prevention Program (DPP) under Dr. Victor Herbert, however, this new effort initially appeared to be a negative blessing: plenty of bad publicity for being a school that was failing, and the chance to be lumped together with other problem schools. One minor but significant outcome of the program's first year was that, with only one or two exceptions, the principals and school staff members had come to see the program as an opportunity and not a stigma.

This turnaround in attitude appeared to be due to several factors. First, even though principals had essentially no choice about participating in the Dropout Prevention Program, or in some cases about the model to which they were assigned, they were involved in the program from its early stages and participated in planning activities. They helped determine important program components (e.g., an emphasis on health issues and school security); they chose their own coordinators; they met with and selected community based organizations to work with; and they had some control over the creation of their school-based budgets for the program. Thus, there appeared to be as much school ownership of a program imposed from above as it is possible to develop.

Moreover, the program was seen as an opportunity because it generated an infusion of new resources into the ten schools. With budgets ranging from $276,000 to nearly $888,000, it brought into the schools not only the services of community agencies, but also tangibles such as additional staff members, an automated attendance/entry system, and OTPS spending money -- a rarity in school budgets.

Over time, another positive feature of the Dropout Prevention Program was the way in which school staff members were involved in positions of responsibility and leadership, both within the individual schools and among the DPP network. This was true not only for many of the program coordinators, but also for teachers, paraprofessionals, and administrators who participated in the program's Summer Institutes and on the DPP teams in the schools. The broad base of program participation appeared to motivate individuals to share ideas and become more involved. This is not to say that staff involvement always ran smoothly or that ideas were easily translated into action, but simply that the structure of the Dropout Prevention Program encouraged new forms of collaboration among school staff.

Further, schools came to accept being part of the program because Dr. Herbert promised to deflect bad publicity and promote the schools' efforts to improve, and was in large part able to do so. Finally, the Dropout Prevention Program emphasized experimentation and innovation in meeting the needs of at-risk students; rather than add layers of bureaucratic procedures, the program attempted to cut red tape and help schools serve students more effectively. Each of these factors helped the schools to view their participation in the Dropout Prevention Program in a positive light and to give their efforts to help potential dropouts a concrete programmatic identity.

The schools in the Dropout Prevention Program were intended to become "laboratories for change." The degree to which this actually occurred was, to a certain extent, associated with program model. Systemic and modified systemic schools, which had larger amounts of money to spend on school-based components, did tend to think more in terms of overall change as they planned their first year activities, even though the actual implementation of change was uneven within the models. The schools with large budget allocations for community based organizations (CBOs), on the other hand, found their programs to be characterized primarily by what services the CBOs would deliver to at-risk youngsters.

All ten DPP schools had significant school-based funding "constants," however, which reduced perceptions of DPP being a drop-in program that was unconnected to the ongoing life of the school. In addition, the major program components -- attendance outreach, guidance and counseling, alternative educational programs, and the like -- paralleled regular school processes. With the extra funding and the emphasis on activities that schools normally perform, all ten schools were encouraged to make dropout prevention part of their central school goals. The degree to which schools actually did so was less dependent on program model and appeared to be more strongly associated with other factors which will be described more fully in future evaluation reports.

One factor that appeared to be essential to the program's success was active administrative support. Principals who symbolically supported the program by placing it centrally among the school's priorities, and who gave the program practical support by devoting time and resources to it, generally had programs that were more successfully implemented. When the principal took a more laissez-faire approach to the program, it was crucial that some other administrative-level support be given to the program, either by having the coordinator be an assistant principal or by having another administrator supervise the coordinator or facilitate his/her work.

## Correspondence to model designation

The ten high schools in the Dropout Prevention Program were assigned to one of three program models, designed to test different kinds of service delivery. The models were defined by whether they served at-risk students through a case management, systemic, or combined approach, and by whether program services were intended to have an impact on at-risk students alone or the larger student population as well. The fourth program model, the AI/DP schools, was included as a "pure CBO" strategy, designed to focus on case management alone with less impact on the whole school than in any DPP model.

For the most part, schools did exhibit the programmatic features of the models to which they were assigned. However, we did find some blending of models. First, in the systemic model, schools found it necessary to target some services specifically for at-risk students. They were not content to adopt innovations that created a new but still homogeneous school environment, and deliberately sought to do something special for their at-risk students. The targeted services were not necessarily case management services, but might be special classes, after-school activities, or job placements as well. In many cases, these services were provided by community based organizations.

Conversely, schools in the case management models (both the modified CBO model in DPP and the AI/DP pure CBO model) appeared also to adopt some systemic strategies for change. These schools had at least some funding for school-based components (more true in DPP than AI/DP), and the CBOs generally addressed only the social/personal needs and a limited range of educational needs of targeted students who, for the most part, still remained in the school building. Thus, it became important to develop systemic innovations that would make the school environment more suitable for at-risk students but would also affect other students, for example through mastery learning, blocked educational programs, conflict resolution programs, or attendance-related school clubs.

Thus, it was observed that the systemic model schools gradually adopted some targeted strategies and the case management schools gravitated toward some systemic strategies. While this occurred in every model, schools within the models differed in the degree to which they expanded their orientations. Factors which contributed to the shifts in emphasis may include the school's technical ability to increase the number and complexity of innovations, the leader's commitment to multiple dimensions of change, the school's prior involvement in change efforts, and/or adequate funding to pursue both types of strategies.

It is likely that as the program develops over time and schools can incorporate more innovations, we will see even more efforts in both directions, toward school-wide programmatic and environmental improvements as well as toward improvements focused on specific types of students. The spillover from one orientation to another appears healthy, and probably has something to do with schools seeing themselves as laboratories for extensive change, with the resources and support for trying a variety of interventions.

## Community based organizations working in high schools

Twelve community organizations contracted to provide dropout prevention services in the high schools. As noted above, the schools were able to choose which CBOs they wanted to work with. Representatives of the community organizations made presentations before school personnel involved in DPP and submitted contract proposals. Working with recommendations made by the central DPP staff, in nearly all cases the schools were able to make the final decisions about CBOs. The most notable exceptions were two schools who were "strongly urged" to take Operation Success, a work readiness and counseling program, because it was felt that budget allocations for these schools would buy more services through Operation Success than through any other program model.

As with the middle school programs, it was necessary during the first year of the Dropout Prevention Program to test the waters of school/CBO collaboration and work through some basic but very important issues. A number of difficulties, for example, had to do with program start-up. The contractual process got underway during the summer of 1985, but legal problems were not resolved in some cases for months. Few high school CBOs were in place when school began in September; they thus missed an important opportunity to catch students and staff at the beginning of the fall term. Most CBO programs were in place by late November, however, although a few were not fully operational until the following spring. (In a few cases, CBOs delayed hiring staff until they found individuals who met specific criteria, e.g., case managers who were bilingual.)

Once in the schools, CBOs experienced unintended but nevertheless irksome delays in getting telephones and other equipment installed. Space was a very difficult issue. Most of the 13 high schools are oversubscribed, and space in them is at a premium. In general, the CBOs were assigned crowded but adequate space -- in some schools they got prime, centrally located rooms, although in other schools the CBOs had to share rooms with other programs. In no school did the CBO have enough space to provide more than token privacy for student counseling, and when a CBO was assigned good space, the trade-off often appeared to be that school people resented the allocation of space.

Some problems with CBO start-up emerged simply because of an initial level of school mistrust of the CBOs. Budget figures seemed to figure prominently in the minds of school persons: they wanted the money to pay for their own programs, or they questioned whether the CBOs were delivering services commensurate with their funding levels.

Other problems emerged because of general confusion about which students to serve (discussed further below). CBOs were given incomplete lists of students to serve, or multiple and overlapping lists, or no lists at all. Sometimes the lists contained large numbers of LTAs, or consisted of student names without addresses or other identifying information. The CBOs often felt that they were being set up to fail, deliberately or not, by not knowing what students they should be serving.

Probably the central obstacle to smooth initial school/CBO collaboration was the lack of clear lines of communication and authority between the CBOs and the schools. In some schools, principals and coordinators felt that the CBOs were off-limits from a managerial perspective -- they could not ask to see service delivery records, participate in making hiring decisions or designing program features, and so on. The CBO programs appeared to be separate organizations altogether. CBO staff were employees of the community organization, not the school; their work schedules, training, responsibilities, and support networks were usually oriented toward their own organization. Even when the schools invited CBO staff members to participate in school planning meetings and the like, it was more often to solicit their input into school activities and not vice versa.

In general, it appeared that the CBO programs perceived themselves as accountable internally within their own organizations, and to their contractual obligations, rather than directly under the schools' authority. If the tables were reversed and CBOs played host to school programs, schools would probably have a similar perspective. But the condition of two institutions working together as equals rather than in a hierarchical relation was not meant to preclude communication between the schools and the CBOs. Both institutions needed to communicate with each other, and the CBOs appeared in some cases to be more cognizant of this than the schools were. Most CBOs were eager, and sometimes desperate, to work in collaboration with school leaders to plan and implement the dropout prevention programs. It was generally school personnel who did not seek to include CBO project directors and site supervisors in school meetings or other administrative activities. In contrast, in those cases where school people pursued the CBOs for information about services delivered, the CBOs appeared quite willing to discuss their programs and how they could more effectively integrate with the school's own goals.

This problem may have been exacerbated by patterns of communication and networking established in the Dropout Prevention Program structure. Although principals met together and coordinators met together, neither met regularly as a group with representatives of the CBOs. In individual cases some school personnel did meet with the directors of their CBOs, and this appeared to generally result in mutual understandings. Similarly, in those instances when schools and CBO site supervisors made concerted efforts to communicate, the result was usually better working relationships. In these interactions, individual personalities and working styles appeared to be important variables. When a CBO site supervisor got along well with school people and was perceived as flexible, more coordination was likely to occur. This may create problems for the future: if CBOs bend over backwards to work with the schools, they run the risk of being asked to take on extraneous responsibilities, or to service more students than they can handle. On the other hand, the CBOs themselves often seemed to understand the importance of making their programs easy for schools to accomodate, at least at the outset.

The CBO presence in schools appeared to have some clear benefits for students, above and beyond the services they delivered. CBO staffs generally had a larger proportion of non-white staff than schools had, and thus introduced more racial/ethnic role models into the students' lives. The students appeared to relate to CBO personnel differently from how they related to teachers and guidance counselors. The CBO programs often represented a respite from the pressures and routines of school life for students, and students perceived CBO staff as their advocates and allies, rather than as authority figures. Even school personnel appeared to recognize the value of students having a place, and people, in the school to whom they could turn for support. Moreover, CBO staff were often more willing than school personnel to negotiate non-school solutions for students' problems, such as enrollment in non-school GED programs or referral to other community services.

CBOs benefited schools as well. They often changed the school's physical environment, by giving at least one area of the school a different look and "feeling." The CBOs often had the resources to produce programs that schools could not do for themselves (e.g., health fairs, Latino week, video productions), or to take students on trips to places, or during times, that the schools could not manage. Even when targeted to particular students, the mere presence of CBO activities in a school appeared to signal that someone in the school cared about students and would relate to them in ways that were out of the ordinary in schools.

### Identification of students

In each high school, regardless of model, there was early disagreement over who should be targeted to receive dropout prevention services. In some cases the criteria for program eligibility were seen as too strict, not allowing marginally at-risk students to receive services. In others, they were seen as not allowing enough discretion for exceptional cases. At least one CBO was concerned that the criteria be equivalent for all schools participating in AI/DP and DPP. For the most part, the AI/DP and DPP program directors were able to be flexible and by mid-year had adjusted the criteria to meet the concerns of the schools and CBOs.

A continual concern was over whether LTAs (long term absentees) were to be included in target lists. Even if the criteria for program eligibility excluded LTAs, in many cases schools gave CBOs lists that included LTAs, and significant amounts of time were spent trying to locate them, often with no success. School attendance outreach workers were also often directed to pursue long term absentees. In some cases, this was seen to be an appropriate dropout prevention program strategy, because it helped schools to have an accurate picture of who were actually on their enrollment registers. In other cases, outreach workers and CBOs were able to work with students who were not coming to school and either bring them back or give them other options to pursue, such as GED training or an alternative school. The general problem was that many staff and CBOs felt that DPP was meant to be a retention program, not a retrieval program. By having to focus on retrieval, many CBOs felt that they were being constrained from providing the services they were contracted to provide to students. Conflicts over performance expectations arose when schools and CBOs did not agree on how much effort should be expended on retrieval of LTAs.

A further problem concerning the identification of students came up in the systemic schools, where there was confusion over whether the long lists of students meeting eligibility criteria were generated simply to justify funding, whether these students were supposed to be deliberately targeted to receive services, or whether they were the students whose attendance and achievement outcomes would be examined in the program evaluation. This question has required attention at the program steering committee level and is being resolved.

Despite the problems concerning the identification of students eligible for services, it appeared that most CBOs were able to identify and locate the numbers of students they were contracted to serve. The lists did change over time, as additional students became eligible for program services. In no case did a CBO appear to turn students away who were eligible for services; several CBOs maintained rosters larger than what they were contracted to serve. Moreover, CBOs often served at least a few ineligible students who, for one reason or another, were seen as needing program services.

### Program facilitation

In the DPP schools, the coordinator was full-time; in the AIDP schools it was a .4 FTE position and was called "facilitator." The distinctions of time and semantics are meaningful. In the DPP schools, the aim of program facilitation was indeed to coordinate and draw together a school component and a CBO component, while in the AIDP Operation Success schools the aim was more generally to help the CBO be able to run its program within the school. As discussed above, there was some correspondence between program model and the degree to which schools were laboratories for overall change; AIDP schools were generally the least likely to focus on programmatic school-wide changes and were given much less funding for this purpose. Given the expanded definition of program goals in the Dropout Prevention Program, the full-time position of coordinator was warranted. The coordinator position was viewed by some school personnel as a soft assignment or an "in-house sabbatical." The coordinators themselves did not share this assessment, however, and in at least one case remarked that they were being given too many non-program responsibilities because they were perceived as having time to spare, when in fact they had more programmatic responsibilities than they could comfortably manage.

Program coordinators learned the job on the job. In general, it was felt that more training should have been provided to the coordinators, particularly in administrative procedures and budgeting. Some coordinators were frustrated by the time it took to process teacher per session payments, purchase supplies, and keep track of budgets when they were unfamiliar with those procedures. When the coordinator was an assistant principal, or had strong support from an AP, the lack of specific training was less important.

In general, the program leadership provided by Dr. Herbert and his staff was seen as extremely helpful in program facilitation. It was oriented toward efficient planning and implementation of activities, and did not stress overburdensome reporting or other bureaucratic requirements. Coordinators claimed that the central DPP staff helped them circumvent obstructive procedures, were responsive to requests for more funding, and helped to facilitate communication between the schools and CBOs. It appears to be true that Mr. Wolinez and the Office of High School Support Services were also helpful to the three AIDP schools included in this evaluation, but the support given AIDP schools by central Board administrators was not a focus of this first year evaluation.

Ten staff members from each school were chosen to participate as "DPP teams" in the program's Summer Institute in 1985, with the intent of involving them in program facilitation during the school year. This aspect of facilitation was successful in some, but not all, schools during the first year. Team members were chosen under a very short time line, and in some cases the school personnel who would have been most appropriate for the team were involved in other activities during July (e.g., the summer PREP program). Further, in a number of schools there was little provision for on-going involvement of the team during the school year (this has been changed centrally for Year Two). Nevertheless, in a few schools, the DPP teams played a major role in implementing the Dropout Prevention Program.

The Pupil Personnel Committee (PPC) functioned in some high schools as a central coordinating committee for DPP. Many schools did not form a special PPC, but discussed programmatic issues in existing guidance or administrative committees. It appeared that when the PPC functioned most effectively, representatives of the CBOs were part of the committee. In schools where no separate PPC was organized specifically for the Dropout Prevention Program, it often took some time before the CBOs were invited to participate in program coordination and oversight activities.

Program facilitation from the CBO perspective generally involved a supervisor who was on-site, and a program director based at the community organization's offices. In the CBO model Operation Success schools there were also two assistant directors, each assigned to a few schools in geographic proximity. The site supervisors occasionally participated in delivering services to students, especially in the smaller CBO programs. More often, however, they concentrated on administrative responsibilities. Coping with start-up problems, negotiating policies and arrangements with school personnel, organizing their own programs, and relating to their directors within the CBO appeared to occupy the bulk of the supervisors' time. This evaluation project has not examined the administrative/organizational arrangements within the community based organizations. In terms of the CBO supervisors' roles vis-a-vis the schools, it can generally be said that site supervisors either had to assert their need to be included in program management activities or, as discussed above, had to be extremely accomodating and flexible about waiting for school personnel to accept their presence in the school. Many principals and program coordinators did try to ease the CBOs' entry into the schools, but it was equally likely that someone in the school was wary of the CBO and would, intentionally or not, fail to make optimal use of their participation.

### Attendance outreach

All high schools had in place some level of attendance monitoring and outreach prior to DPP/AIDP program implementation; the dropout prevention initiative was to add services and/or target them specifically for at-risk students. The systemic and modified systemic schools tended to view attendance outreach as a critical component of their programs and increased the level of personnel support for this activity. Using DPP funds, they hired family workers to make phone calls, send letters, and visit homes. Usually the procedures were organized so that the students most in need of outreach services received priority; these were generally the school's target population. Home visiting was often viewed as the most important element of outreach, even though, especially in the systemic schools with large numbers of targeted students, not all students' families could possibly be visited. In at least one school, however, it was felt that a phone call from someone at the school who could speak a family's home language was an equally effective intervention. Some CBO programs in the systemic and modified systemic schools followed student attendance as well, either to determine eligibility for their own activities or in conjunction with regular school attendance services.

Schools in the modified and pure CBO models used program funds to hire at least one para-professional to assist with attendance monitoring and to report to the program facilitator or coordinator. Most coordinators did not maintain records on student attendance separately from the school's regular records, however, and so they were often unable to monitor attendance over time. This problem was addressed by plans to install a computer based attendance/entry monitoring system in each school in the Dropout Prevention Program; however, the systems were not installed until the very end of June. For the most part, the modified and pure CBO schools relied on their Operation Success programs to monitor the attendance of students enrolled in the program. To varying degrees in each of its sites, Operation Success sent letters to students, made phone calls, and did home visits. The program's attendance efforts were generally not coordinated with school efforts.

Many kinds of attendance incentives were built into the Dropout Prevention Program. Some activities were contingent on good attendance, for example participation in trips, jobs, or educational internship placements. All schools had prizes, awards, or other forms of recognition for attendance gains, often available to the entire school population and not just at-risk students. There were also some program wide incentives, mostly provided through corporate contributions: books, T-shirts, concert tickets, sports jackets. For the most part the distribution of incentives was well-managed and appeared to be a positive aspect of the program. However, problems similar to those in the middle schools arose, as some school personnel felt that the incentives were rewarding the wrong students or as competitions for awards left some students disappointed.

### Guidance and counseling

The systemic and modified systemic high schools used DPP funds to provide additional school-based guidance and counseling services and to lower student/counselor ratios which in many schools were quite high. In some cases, the DPP-funded counselors had specific populations to serve, e.g., ninth grade holdovers, or were organized to relate in closer and more comprehensive ways to groups of students. In at least one case, however, they simply added extra services to the schools' guidance departments, not different ones.

The CBOs brought to the schools an extra infusion of counseling services, both formal and informal. Although the level of service delivery to students was not ascertained, it was apparent that CBOs were engaging with students in many kinds of personal, social, and vocational counseling efforts. Using group and individual sessions, CBO services were sometimes different from those which school guidance counselors have the time or resources to provide. Schools varied in the degree of coordination they achieved between school-based and CBO-based guidance efforts. In some schools, the Pupil Personnel Committee or a counterpart was used to discuss individual cases and channel referrals to the CBO where appropriate. In other schools, it was felt that school and CBO counseling and guidance services overlapped, and few efforts to coordinate the two were made.

### School level linkages

Nearly all of the high schools were dissatisfied with the linkage efforts between themselves and their feeder schools, primarily because they thought the middle schools were responsible for linkages and didn't carry through, or because they believed the middle schools to be resistant to any kind of linkage with zoned high schools. In this regard, school level linkage appears to be entangled in the political and bureaucratic divisions between the decentralized community school districts and the centralized high school administration. Additionally, there was some programmatic confusion over whether the goal of linkage efforts was to help specific students orient to their new school or to encourage more students from the local feeders to choose the zoned high school. Although in most cases schools did send students and staff to middle schools, or sponsor orientation sessions at the high school, or open the high school facilities to use by middle school students, these programs were generally perceived to have little impact.

Two exceptions to the problems with linkage should be noted. One modified systemic school developed a comprehensive and imaginative linkage program, primarily on the strength of one person's involvement in the effort. In another school where there was a long-standing lack of communication between a high school and its primary feeder, the CBO was able to initiate some cooperative enterprises that brought middle school students to the high schools and vice versa.

It appears that in an important way, the presence of dropout prevention programs in both middle schools and high schools will function as a key linkage activity. At-risk students become familiar with attendance outreach, incentive strategies, and other targeted services at their middle schools. When they move to the high school and find a program that provides the same kinds of services, they may consider that program a "safe haven" in an otherwise entirely new school environment.

### Health services

When the Dropout Prevention Program was in the planning stages, school personnel agreed that health care was an important aspect of dropout prevention. But largely because there was no specified budget for this program component and no formal structure to involve the schools' health personnel (who themselves are employees of the Department of Health) in the

Dropout Prevention Program, special health services for at-risk students were poorly implemented in most high schools. The central DPP staff did request full-time health resource coordinators for all high schools, and in some cases received them. Those coordinators typically provided general health services to the school and did not have the opportunity to focus primarily on at-risk students. This may be a start-up year finding, with schools better able to coordinate health services as the Dropout Prevention Program becomes more established. Additionally, many CBOs did address health issues through special programming (health fairs, drug rap sessions) and/or referral to outside services, of which they were generally more aware than school personnel were.

Schools continue to cite the need for improved school-based health services. One school in the Dropout Prevention Program was fortunate to have in place a comprehensive health care clinic to serve all of its students. During DPP's first year, central staff worked with several schools to develop proposals to establish similar clinics in other schools.

## Alternative educational programming

Several kinds of educational program changes took place through the impetus of the Dropout Prevention Program. While the main thrust of dropout prevention efforts, at least in the start-up year, was to provide support services for at-risk students and adjust the school environment to fit their needs, schools' primary purposes are carried out through their instructional programs and it did not take long for schools to use DPP or AIDP resources to begin to address curriculum and instructional issues. The degree to which this occurred in schools appeared related to the schools' efforts in one or another improvement program, especially the state CSIP (Comprehensive School Improvement Plan) or Board-initiated school redesign. Schools which began to make important changes in their regular education programs were often those which had prior commitments to doing so. On the other hand, for several schools the Dropout Prevention Program appeared to be a real catalyst for change. The extra resources and the emphasis on positive efforts instead of defensive posturing allowed some schools to escape the burden of their poor reputations and focus on improvement.

It appeared that some schools in all models, including the pure CBO model, used AI/DP or DPP funds for curriculum development or staff training in order to better serve at-risk students through the schools' general instructional program. In addition, the systemic and modified systemic schools implemented reductions of class size, special tutoring programs, after-school activities, p.m. schools, and course enrichment activities.

In the case management schools, Operation Success helped some students to find more appropriate educational placements, in GED programs, for example. The OS schools operated special classes for targeted students in Manhattan; the classes were housed in OS facilities and staffed by Board of Education teachers. The goal of this program component was to enable students enrolled in Operation Success skills training to stay in one general location for their entire instructional day. It also affected the schools, by removing sometimes troublesome students from the school buildings.

Several schools organized transitional programs for students who returned to school as a result of DPP or AIDP outreach efforts. The academic rigor of these transitional programs was questioned by some sources, but schools were making an attempt to facilitate students' reentry into school.

Finally, career-related educational alternatives were a significant part of dropout prevention activities. Operation Success provided vocational evaluations, skills training, educational internships and job placements to students. Other CBO-based programs utilized job readiness training and work experience programs as well. Many of these programs offered student stipends and students were eligible only if they met attendance and achievement criteria.

### School security

Security and behavior management are ongoing concerns of the thirteen schools in the four models. The problems are generally exaggerated in the media, but nevertheless most of the schools are actively engaged in finding ways to promote school safety and good discipline. The Dropout Prevention Program explicitly addressed the security issue for its ten high schools and made budget funds available for this component. All of the schools purchased an automated entry system which will be used to control student passage in and out of school and to provide in-house computerized data on absenteeism, lateness, and cutting. The systems were installed at the end of the 1985-86 school year and are currently being debugged. Additionally, some schools purchased extra security hardware and hired extra guards and student monitors.

Beyond these measures, however, several schools took the opportunity to consider how the security component could be used to have a positive, not just deterrant, effect on the school environment. Thus one school gave its security guards special training in using a guidance approach to security. Four schools used programs in mediation and conflict resolution to help students develop skills in handling interpersonal problems. These programs were so popular that at least one additional school requested a mediation program for the current school year.

### Conclusion

For all but one of the thirteen schools, 1985-86 was the first year for their dropout prevention programs under the present models. In general, the schools had typical start-up problems and successes. Some schools seemed very quick to become laboratories for change, while others were slower to put major changes in motion or were unable to do so during the first year. Most schools had one or two especially strong program components, and a comparable number of weaker components. Reasons for uneven implementation appeared to include variations in what schools were already trying to do and the degree to which innovations represented completely new efforts for schools, variations in leader support for program components, staff technical capabilities, the level of resources devoted to one component versus another, and the simple fact that not everything can happen at once.

All of the schools had to learn to work with community organizations. This was a more crucial problem in the case management schools, where the bulk of the program consisted of the CBO component, but it affected implementation of CBO programs in all schools. In general, the success of this effort was dependent on how quickly the two organizations learned to trust and communicate with each other.

Overall, by the end of the first year, most of the thirteen high schools were more committed to their dropout prevention programs than they were before the programs began. Having negotiated many of the logistical, organizational, and attitudinal obstacles to program implementation, they were also in a much better position to make good use of the opportunities the programs represented. This summary of first-year findings (and the more detailed reports in the Appendices) has outlined salient issues in program management and service delivery. The evaluation of years two and three will enable us to determine which issues have specifically to do with program start-up and which arise from the ongoing nature of the schools and/or program designs.

# CHAPTER FOUR
# ANALYSES OF STATISTICAL DATA ON TARGETED STUDENTS

## Characteristics of targeted high school students

This section describes the characteristics of students participating in dropout prevention programs in the 13 high schools under study. A total of 6068 students were identified as program participants. Most (89.4%) of these were admitted to the program in the fall of 1985, and more than 95% of these remained in the program throughout the 1985-86 school year.

The program served students in the lower grade levels in the participating high schools. The grade composition of the target population is shown in Figure H-1. A majority (54.9%) of the target group were ninth graders in 1985-86. About one-third were tenth graders, and about ten percent were eleventh graders. Only about 2.5% of those participating were enrolled in the twelfth grade. In addition, 380 students were designated as special education enrollees, representing 6.4% of the target population. There may have been additional students designated as resource room students, but we cannot identify them from the available data.

Most of the program participants were 16 or 17 years old at the onset of the program in the fall of 1985. Figure H-2 shows the age distribution of the target group. Almost a third of participants were 16 years old, and more than a quarter were 17 years of age. About 90% of the target population was between 15 and 18 years of age at the onset of the program.

While the distribution of students across grade levels and ages is interesting, it does not readily describe the level of risk faced by the target population. Just how poorly were the targeted students doing before they entered the program?

The population of high school students targeted to receive services in 1985-86 was a high risk population. A considerable amount of research has indicated that prior attendance and course performance are the best predictors of who drops out of high school. By these criteria, the students identified to receive services were very much at risk of dropping out of high school.

Most of the targeted students had very poor prior attendance <Endnote 1>. Figure H-3 shows the number of days students in the target group were absent in the 1984-85 school year, prior to program entry. Almost one-quarter of the target group was absent more than 80 days in the 1984-85 school year. More than three-fifths was absent more than 40 days in that year. In contrast, only about one of every six program participants were absent less than 20 days in the 1984-85 school year. Many of these were

Fig. H-1

**Grade composition**

targeted high school students

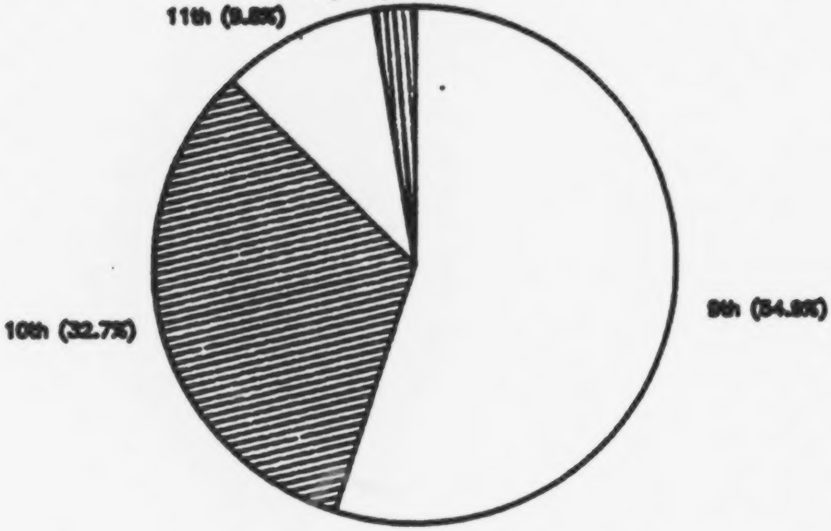


Fig. H-2

**Age composition**

targeted high school students

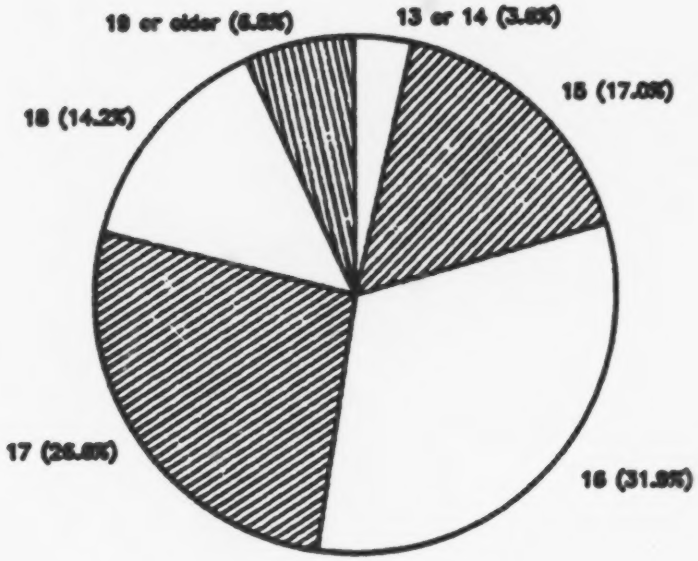


Fig. H-3

## Distribution of 1984–85 absenteeism

among targeted high school students

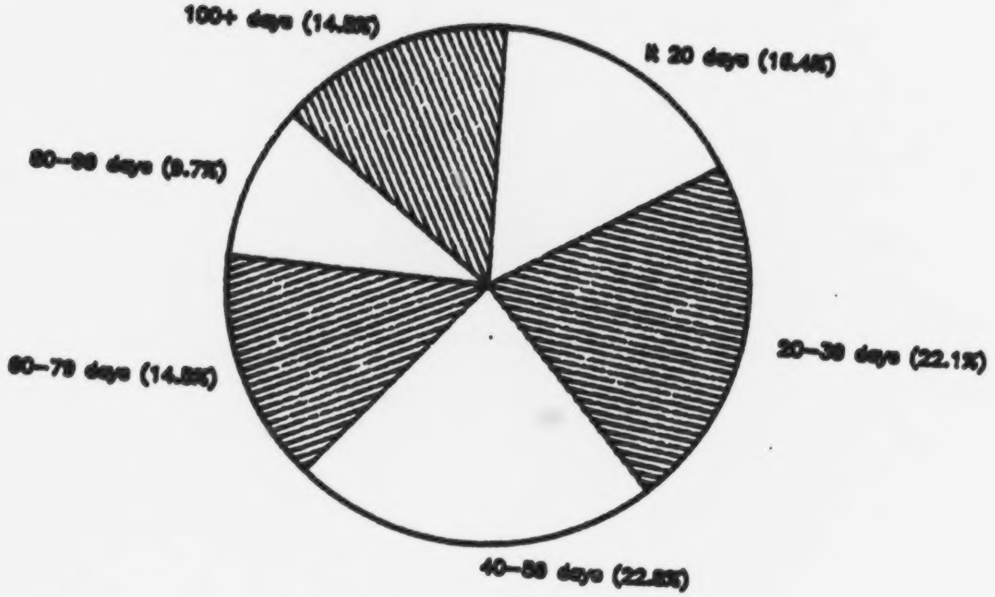
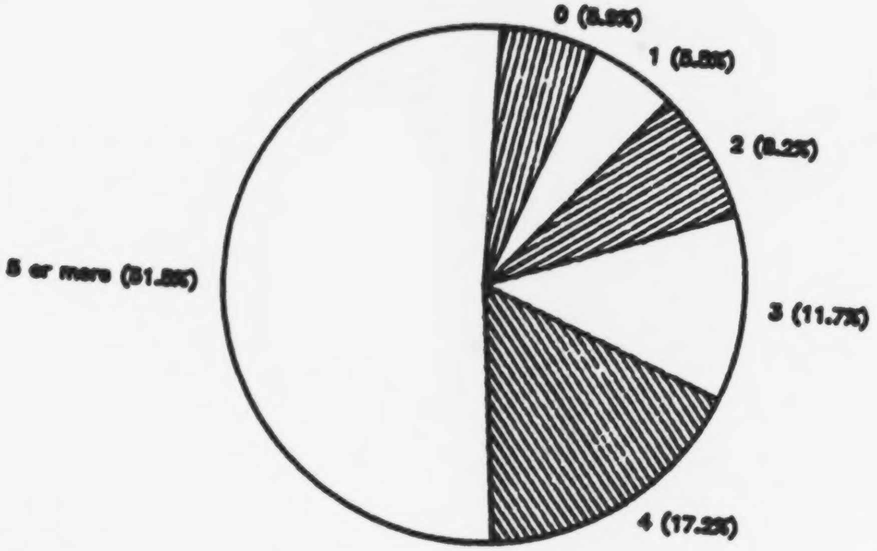


Fig. H-4

## Subjects failed prior to program,

targeted high school students



spring admissions to the program eligible on the basis of poor attendance in the fall of 1985.

In addition to their poor attendance, most program participants were experiencing trouble in the classroom. The number of subjects failed by targeted students prior to their entry into the dropout prevention program is displayed in Figure H-4. More than 50% of the target group failed 5 or more courses in the 1984-85 school year. An additional 30% failed 3 or 4 courses in that year. In all, approximately 90% of the targeted population failed 2 or more full-credit courses in the year preceding entry into the dropout prevention program.

Many students met several of the program's secondary eligibility criteria. The secondary eligibility criteria included being overage for one's grade, limited English proficiency (LEP), reading two or more years below grade level, and failing two or more major subjects in the preceding school year. The proportion of targeted high school students meeting each of these criteria is presented in Figure H-5. As was noted above, about 90% of the participating students met the course failure criterion. In addition, roughly 60% of the target students were identified as being overage for grade, and about 60% were reading two or more years below grade level prior to program entry. According to school records, a small fraction (6.7%) were eligible due to limited English proficiency.

Most students were at risk according to several criteria. We examined six high risk categories: limited English proficiency, being overage for grade, reading at least two years below grade level, being designated a long-term absentee (LTA), having failed two or more subjects in 1984-85, and having been absent 30 or more days in 1984-85.

For each student, we counted the number of risk factors present. Figure H-6 shows the distribution of risk factors for targeted high school students. Almost half of the targeted students had three or more high risk characteristics. About one student in five had four or more of these high risk factors. One student in eight possessed none of these risk characteristics.

The students targeted for services in some high schools were at greater risk of dropping out than the target groups in other high schools. Some schools had mainly students with extremely poor records of prior attendance and course performance. Others served students whose attendance and performance, while far from exemplary, were palpably better than the students in the aforementioned schools.

In some schools, almost none of the targeted students had very high absenteeism rates in the 1984-85 school year. In others, large numbers were chronic absentees. Figure H-7 shows

Fig. H-5

% meeting secondary eligibil. criteria

targeted high school students

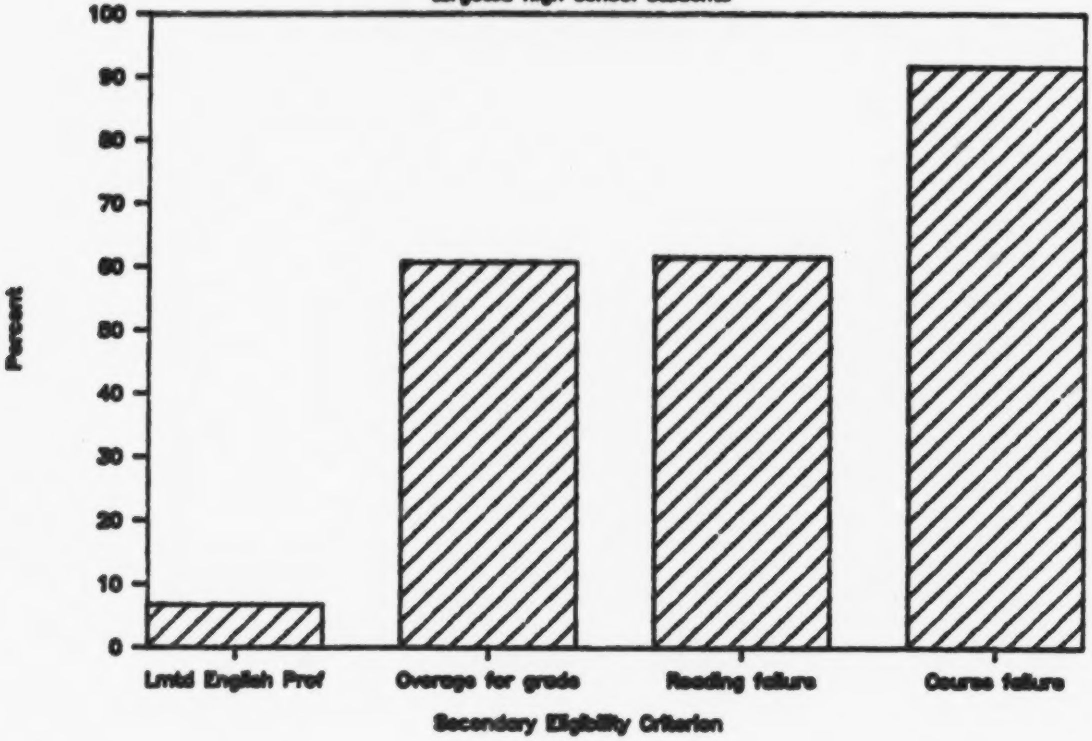


Fig. H-6

Number of high risk factors,

targeted high school students

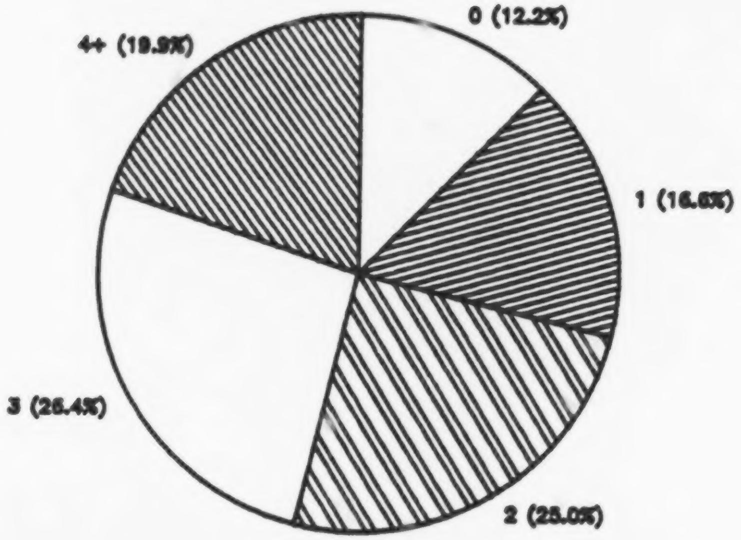


Fig. H-7

% high prior absences by school

targeted high school students

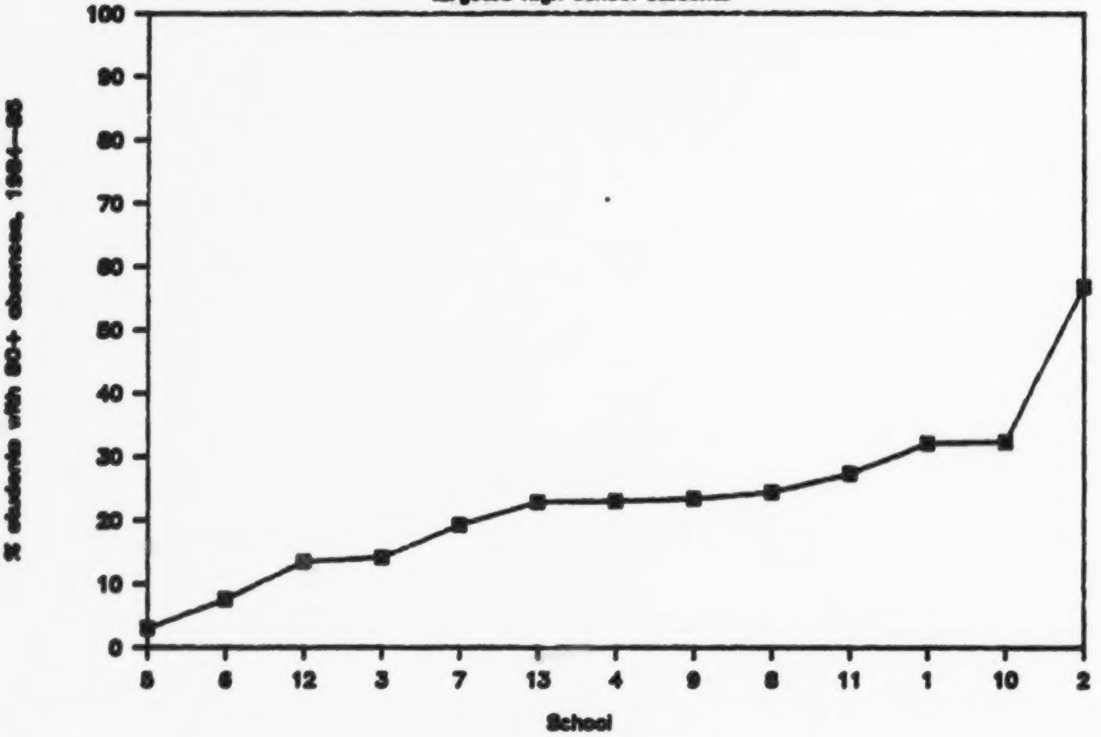
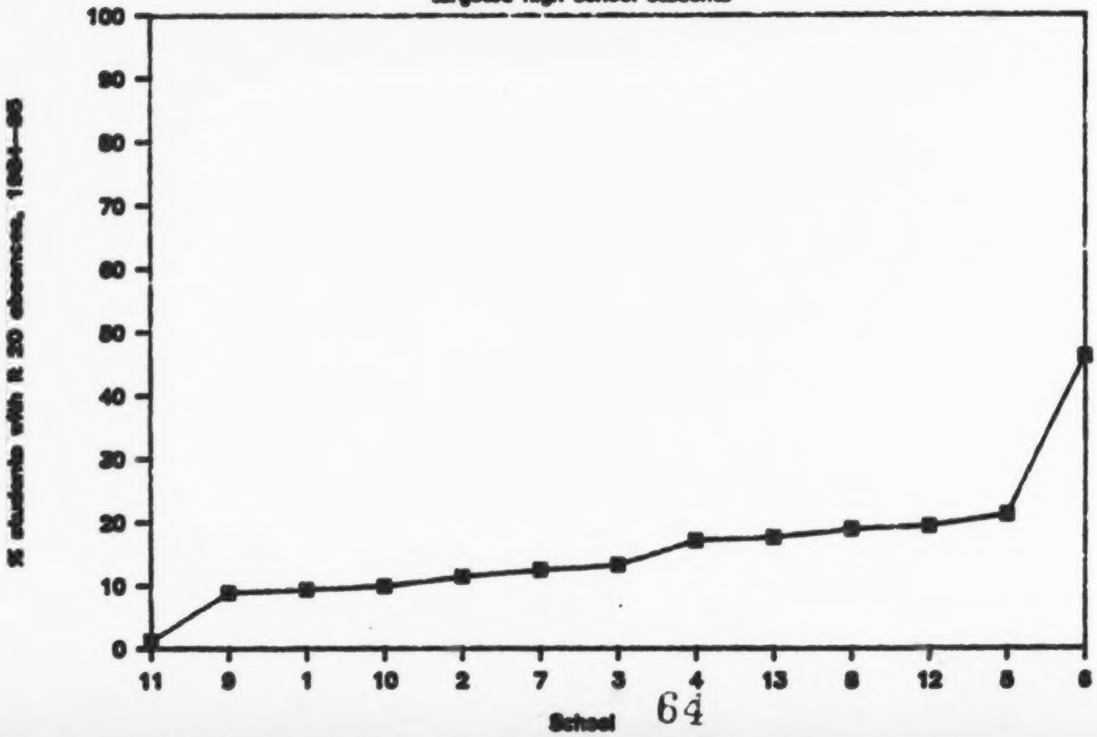


Fig. H-8

% low prior absences by school

targeted high school students



the proportion of targeted students in each school which had 80 or more absences in the 1984-85 school year. The schools are arranged in ascending order, with the school with the lowest figure on the left, and the school with the highest figure on the right. In School 5, for instance, less than 5% of the targeted students had 80 or more absences in the year prior to program entry. In contrast, more than 50% of the students in School 2 had that many absences in the 1984-85 school year. School 2's figure is exceptionally high, but even the next two highest figures, for Schools 10 and 1, are over 30%.

Some schools served almost no students with good prior attendance, while others served substantial numbers. Figure H-8 displays the proportion of targeted students in each school which had fewer than 20 absences in the 1984-85 school year. As a point of reference, twenty absences in a school year of 180 days would correspond to an attendance rate of almost 90%. Once again the schools are ordered from low to high on this percentage. As with the proportion of high absence youth, there is considerable variation among schools in the proportion of low absence youth. In School 11, almost all of the targeted students had greater than 20 days absent in the 1984-85 school year. In School 6, however, almost 50% of the targeted students had fewer than 20 days absent in the preceding school year. Most of the remaining schools were bunched in the range from 10 to 20 percent. Nevertheless, the contrast between the two extremes is quite striking.

In addition to differences in their attendance patterns, targeted students in different schools had varying levels of course performance. Almost all students were failing at least two courses in the preceding school year <Endnote 2>. But in some schools, targeted students were failing a larger proportion of their classes than in others. Figure H-9 shows the proportion of the subjects taken by targeted youth in the 1984-85 school year that were passed, for each high school. The variation among schools is considerable. In the lowest school, School 2, targeted students succeeded in passing only one out of every six courses in which they were enrolled in 1984-85. In the highest school, School 6, targeted students passed almost half of their courses in the year preceding entry into the dropout prevention program. While even the highest school represents a population at risk of dropping out of school, there is a tangible difference between students passing one out of six courses and students passing three out of six.

Dropout prevention program high schools also differed in the extent to which they served students who were overage for their grade, reading two or more years below grade level, and who were limited English proficient (LEP). Figures H-10 to H-12 show school-to-school differences in the proportion of targeted students who were reading two years below grade level, overage

Fig. H-9

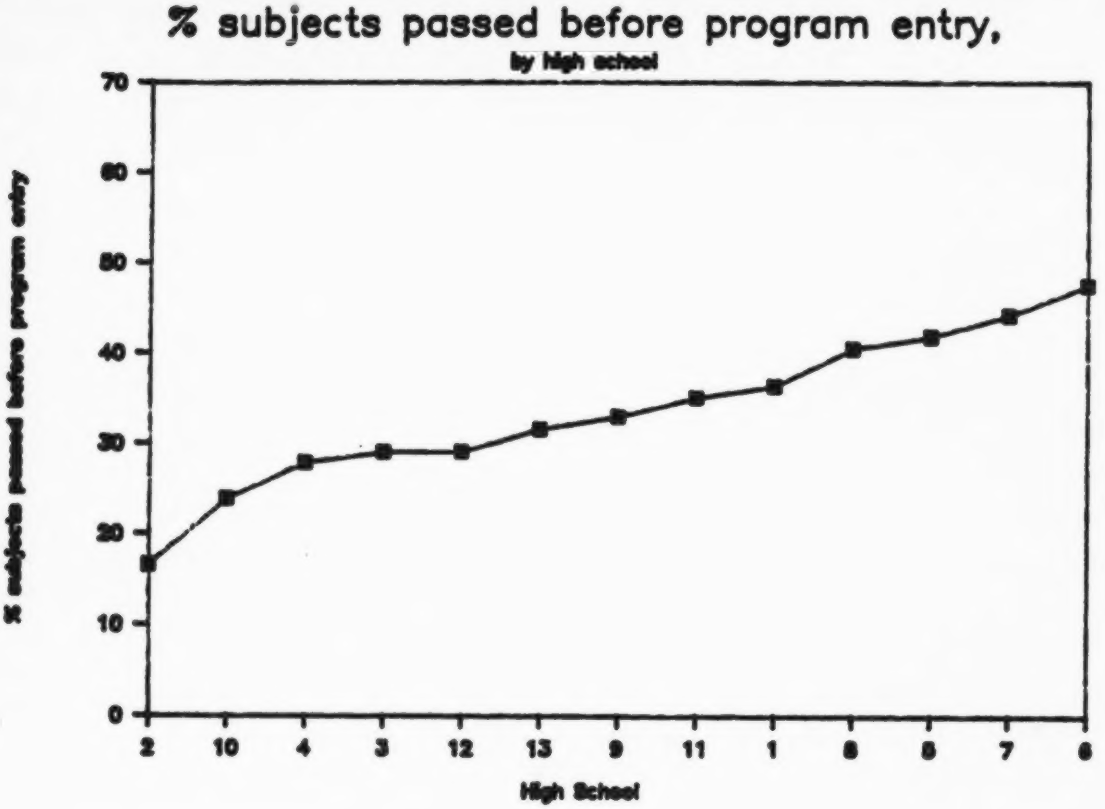


Fig. H-10

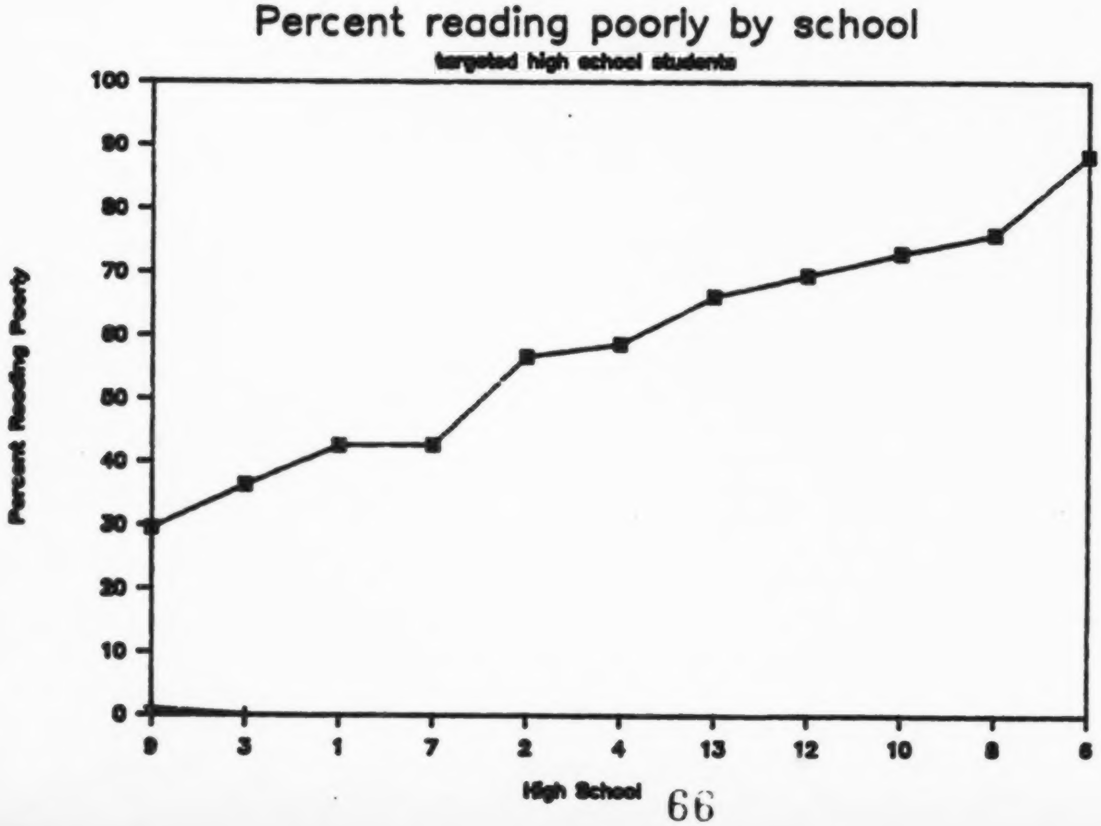


Fig. H-11

## Percent overage by school

**targeted high school students**

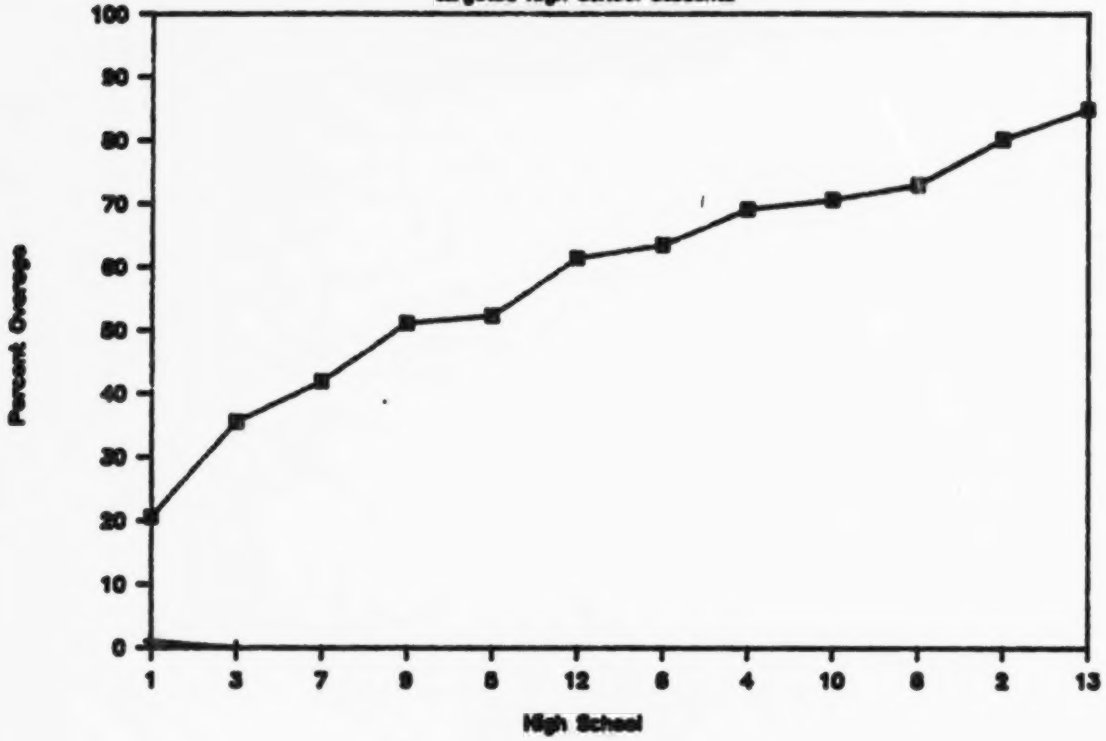
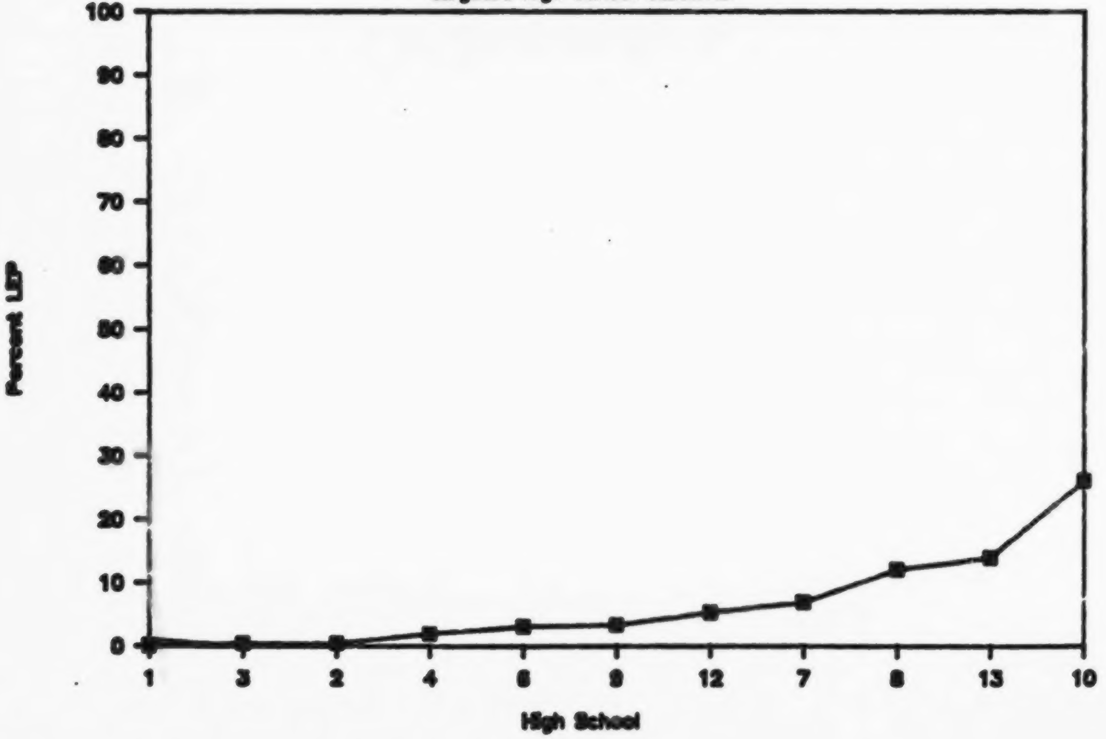


Fig. H-12

## Percent LEP by School

**targeted high school students**



for their grade, and limited English proficient. These results are not discussed in detail here. In general, they confirm the general finding that the different high schools participating in the program targeted differing kinds of students for dropout prevention services. One important way in which students differed across schools was in the level at which they were at risk of dropping out. Some schools served populations that were worse off than others.

While the different program models also served somewhat different populations of students, the differences across program models were not as large as the differences across schools. The differences across program models were most pronounced for the number of days absent prior to entry into the program and the proportion of students reading at least two years below grade level.

Students in modified systemic high schools had better prior attendance than the other program models, and students in pure CBO high schools substantially worse prior attendance. Figure H-13 shows the 1984-85 attendance of targeted students in the four program models collapsed into three categories: less than 20 days absent in 1984-85, 20-79 days absent, and 80 or more days absent in 1984-85. Figure H-13 indicates that a lower proportion of students in modified systemic high schools were absent more than 80 days in the year prior to program entry than in the other three models. Additionally, a higher proportion of the target population in modified systemic high schools had less than 20 absences in the 1984-85 school year. Conversely, targeted students in pure CBO high schools were especially likely to have very poor prior attendance records.

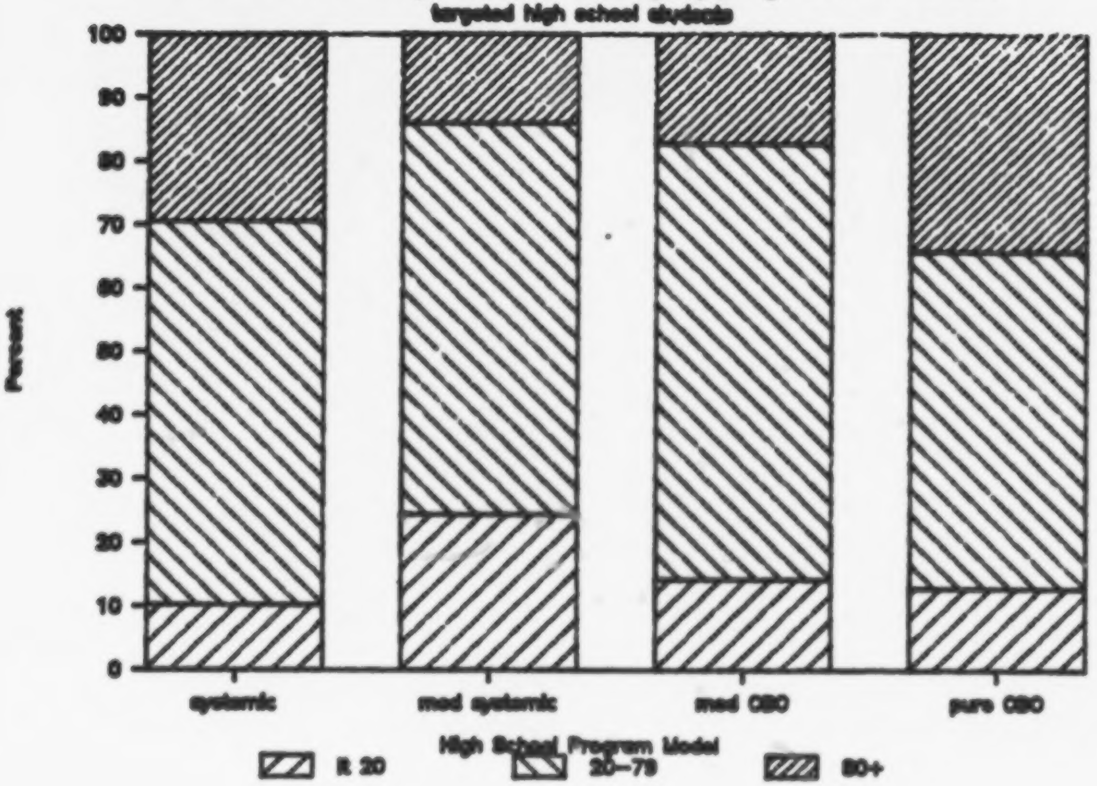
While target students in modified systemic schools had somewhat better prior attendance than targeted youth in the other three program models, they were more likely to be reading at least two years below grade level. Approximately 80% of the targeted students in modified systemic high schools were reading two or more years below grade level at the time of program entry. The proportions in systemic, modified CBO and pure CBO schools were between 50 and 55%.

No school nor program model was serving students who were consistently better off than the students in other schools or models. School 6, for instance, served students with better than average prior attendance and course performance, but worse reading performance. The important fact here is that the student body compositions and processes for selecting students into the dropout prevention program interacted to create distinct target groups which differed in measurable ways across schools.

The fact that the target populations differed across schools and program models has implications for comparing the relative

Fig. H-13

1984—85 days absent by program model



performance of students in the different schools and program models. If the target groups were identical across schools and models, it would be straightforward to assess which schools and programs were doing better than others. One could assume that the "inputs" or starting levels of the target groups were the same across all schools and program models. The relative performance of the schools and models could then be assessed by comparing the "outputs" or outcome measures for each school and program model.

The present situation is more complicated than this. Because the target populations differ in their "inputs", it is not enough to merely examine school-to-school differences in outcomes. The differing starting positions of the target groups across schools and program models must be taken into account. This is a complex task under the best of circumstances, and nigh impossible here, because of regression effects.

Regression effects ("regression to the mean") are a statistical phenomenon characteristic of examining change in some trait over time. Regression to the mean refers to the tendency for low initial scores on the trait to be associated with higher later scores, and high initial scores to be associated with lower later scores. Low initial scores thus are associated with gains in performance, while high initial scores are associated with losses in performance. The phenomenon is called regression to the mean because the later scores are closer to the overall population mean than the initial scores -- they have regressed to the mean.

If the initial score and later score are not correlated perfectly, there will be some regression to the mean. The lower the correlation between the initial measure and later measure, the greater the regression to the mean. The amount of regression can be expressed as unity minus the correlation between pretest and posttest.

By way of example, assume that the IQ scores of a group of students are examined over two years, where the population mean is 100, and the correlation between the first year score and second year score is .60. Among students with an initial score of 80, the average second year score would be 88, an increase of 8 points (representing 40% of the gap between the initial score and the population mean). Conversely, students with initial scores of 110 would have an average second year score of 106, representing a 4 point loss. It can be shown easily that the regression effects are largest for extreme initial values that are either far above or far below the population mean.

It is important to be cognizant of regression effects when considering the results presented here. Many of the analyses pertain to the measurement of the same phenomenon over time --

attendance in 1984-85 and 1985-86, the proportion of subjects passed over that period, and, for middle school students, standardized test performance in the spring of 1985 and the spring of 1986.

## Relating student outcomes to student characteristics

We compared changes in attendance and the proportion of subjects passed for different types of students. We looked at students with varying levels of prior attendance and course performance, and various risk factors, including limited English proficiency, being overage for one's grade, reading at least two years below grade level, and long-term absentee (LTA) status. We also looked at the number of risk factors students had, as in Figure H-6.

In general, there was little evidence that students who were at varying levels of risk were differentially affected by program participation. Students who were reading at least two years below grade level, for instance, showed the same declines in attendance and courses passed over the program period as students who were reading only one year below grade level or better. Similarly, targeted students who were overage for their grade had similar changes in their attendance and course performance during the program to those of students who were not overage for grade. For most comparisons, student characteristics were unrelated to the apparent effect of program participation.

The remaining three exceptions all show a consistent pattern: students at greatest risk show the smallest declines (and frequently even gains) over the program period, while students at least risk show the largest declines. This pattern is observed in Figures H-14 and H-15. Figure H-14 shows the percentage change in attendance over the program period according to the number of days absent in 1984-85. Targeted students who were absent less than 20 days in 1984-85 had the steepest decline in attendance over the program period. For students who were absent more frequently in 1984-85, the declines in attendance are progressively smaller. Among targeted students who were absent 100 or more days in 1984-85, the proportion of days attended actually increased. The pattern is a clear and regular one.

Similar results are seen for changes in the proportion of subjects passed during the program period. These changes, reported in Figure H-15, are examined among students who failed differing numbers of courses in 1984-85. Among students who failed only one course in 1984-85, the proportion of subjects passed declined 35 percentage points during the program period. Among students failing three subjects in 1984-85, the proportion of subjects they took and passed dropped about 10 percentage points. Finally, among students failing five or more subjects in

Fig. H-14

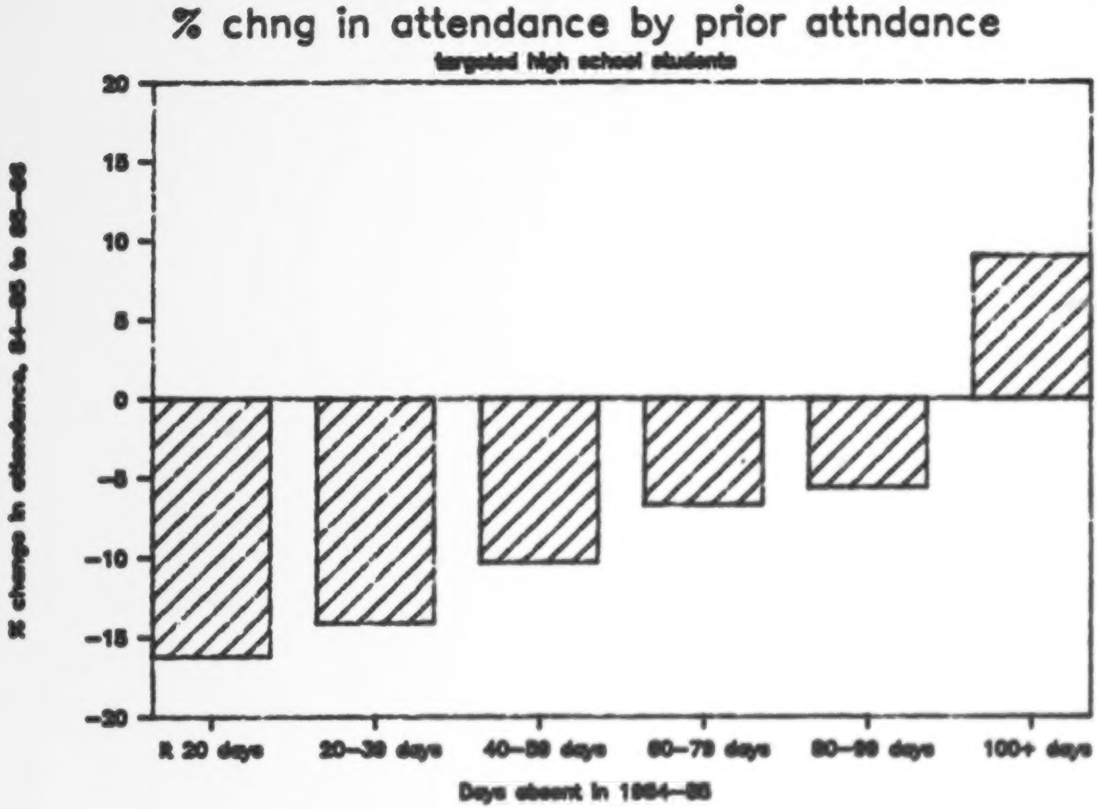
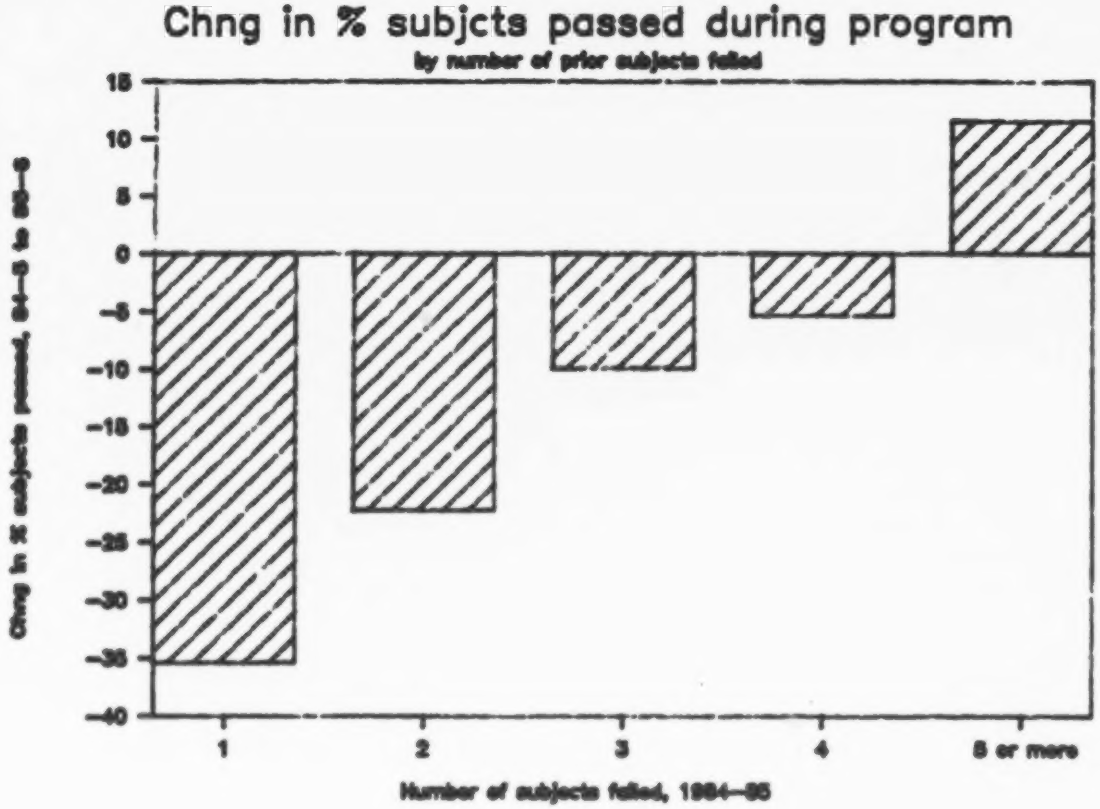

% chng in attendance by prior attndance
targeted high school students
20
15
10
5
0
-5
-10
-15
-20
% change in attendance, 84-85 to 85-86
R 20 days
20-39 days
40-59 days
60-79 days
80-99 days
100+ days
Days absent in 1984-85

Fig. H-15


Chng in % subjcts passed during program
by number of prior subjects failed
Chng in % subjects passed, 84-5 to 85-6
15
10
5
0
-5
-10
-15
-20
-25
-30
-35
-40
1
2
3
4
5 or more
Number of subjects failed, 1984-85

1984-85, the proportion of subjects they passed increased by more than ten percentage points. The pattern is virtually identical to that observed for changes in attendance. At the very highest levels of risk (that is, the lowest levels of prior performance), targeted students actually improved their attendance and course performance relative to their position before entering the dropout prevention program. Among students with the lowest risk levels, performance fell off the most during the program period.

We use this discussion of regression effects to introduce comparisons of outcomes across different DPP high schools and program models. We have seen that changes in performance over the course of the program are systematically related to the starting level. We have also shown that different schools and models served youngsters with different levels of risk -- differing starting levels. Thus, the relative effectiveness of schools and program models in stemming attendance and achievement declines is confounded with the relative risk of the populations served by the various schools and models.

There are differences in the relative performance of students in different DPP high schools and program models. At this time we cannot say conclusively whether these differences are more a result of differences in the relative effectiveness of different schools and program models, or are more properly attributable to differences in the characteristics of the students served in the different settings.

In order to distinguish between these two hypotheses convincingly, two types of data are essential. The first is a better understanding of the process by which students were selected into the dropout prevention program in each school and model, and better measures of the characteristics of students at the time of program entry which might be correlated with their later attendance and school performance patterns. We are making an effort to gather these data in the current year of the evaluation, and anticipate that these data will be more accessible this year than last.

The second type of data which would help clarify the effects of program participation on at risk students is a better understanding of what happened to targeted students in the different schools and program models. If some schools and models really are more effective than others, we should be able to identify why this is so. The key here presumably is measures of the quality and quantity of services provided to at risk youngsters in the various schools. We were unable to obtain reliable measures of the services provided by schools and program models to individual targeted students. Here, too, we expect to collect more reliable data in this year than was available last year <Endnote 3>.

In spite of these caveats, we do present below comparisons of the relative performance of DPP high schools and program models. Our purpose is not to draw attention to those schools which appear to be doing particularly well or poorly, but rather to show the range of outcomes in the schools and models. We believe that it is premature to make any judgments about the relative effects of the program models. Nor is it appropriate at this time to compare the performance of individual schools.

## Attendance Change

Improvement in attendance is measured by the change in the attendance rate before program entry to the rate observed at the end of the first year program period in June 1986. For the majority of students, who entered the program in fall 1985, this attendance change represents the change in the attendance rates for the 1984-85 and 1985-86 school years. For those students entering the program in spring 1986, attendance change represents the difference between fall 1986 and spring 1986 attendance. In all cases, attendance rates refer to the number of days present during the period divided by the sum of the number of days present and absent.

Overall, the attendance of targeted high school students participating in the dropout prevention program declined by 9.1%. The attendance of targeted students declined by 10.3 percentage points among ninth graders, and 7.7 percentage points among tenth through twelfth graders. Because the mix of ninth graders versus more advanced students differed from one school to the next, results are presented separately for ninth graders and tenth through twelfth graders.

Figures H-16 and H-17 show the average change in attendance over the program period for each program high school for ninth graders and tenth through twelfth graders, respectively. In every program high school, the attendance of targeted ninth graders declined. The declines ranged from -3.2 percentage points, in School 2, to -16.9 percentage points, in School 12. In seven of the thirteen high schools under study, targeted ninth graders attended, on average, ten percent fewer days during the program than before it. Based on a school year of approximately 180 days, this indicates that targeted ninth graders attended 18 fewer days of school while they were in the dropout prevention program than before they entered the program.

Patterns of attendance change were a bit more varied across schools for tenth through twelfth grade targeted students. Two schools actually showed increased attendance over the program period, while others showed sharp declines. The schools showing the largest declines for tenth through twelfth grade targeted youth typically had relatively small numbers of such students

Fig. H-16

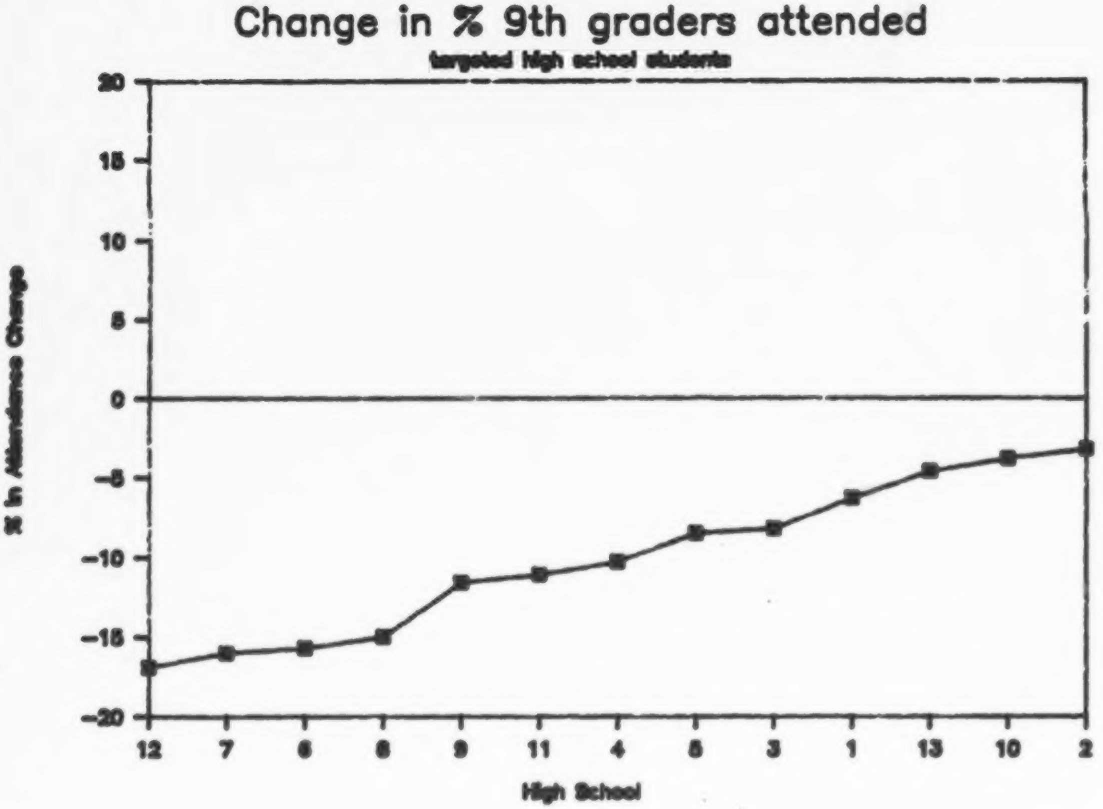
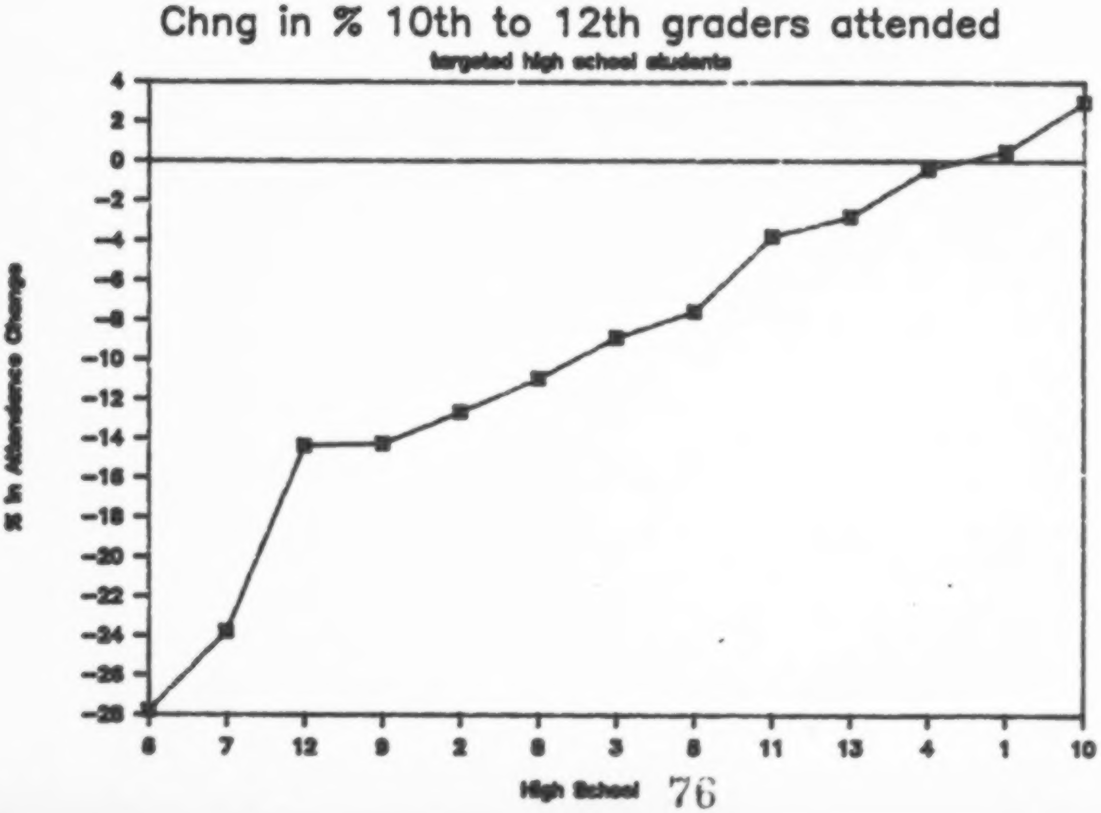


Fig. H-17



identified as program participants. We suspect that there are unmeasured factors which account both for their inclusion in the program and for their divergent attendance patterns.

The four different program models also had differing patterns of attendance change. Figure H-18 shows the change in attendance during the program period for each program model, separately for ninth graders and tenth through twelfth graders. Among both ninth graders and more advanced students, targeted youngsters in systemic and pure CBO high schools had smaller attendance declines than targeted students in modified systemic and modified CBO high schools. The four program models differ more for targeted ninth graders than for students in higher grades.

The same difficulties surrounding making comparisons among schools and program models also apply to drawing conclusions about the overall effectiveness of the dropout prevention program. We have indicated that the attendance of targeted high school students declined by about 9% during the period they participated in the program. In order to assess the effects of the program, we need a reasonable guess as to how they would have fared in the absence of the program altogether.

Our best guess is that, in the absence of the dropout prevention program, the attendance of students like the ones targeted to receive services would have declined at least 9%, and perhaps slightly more. We would like to be able to state this more forcefully, but the data are somewhat fragmented and anecdotal. We do not have, for instance, hard data either from New York City public schools or elsewhere on the average attendance declines of students with the same characteristics and risk factors as the students targeted for services by the Dropout Prevention Program.

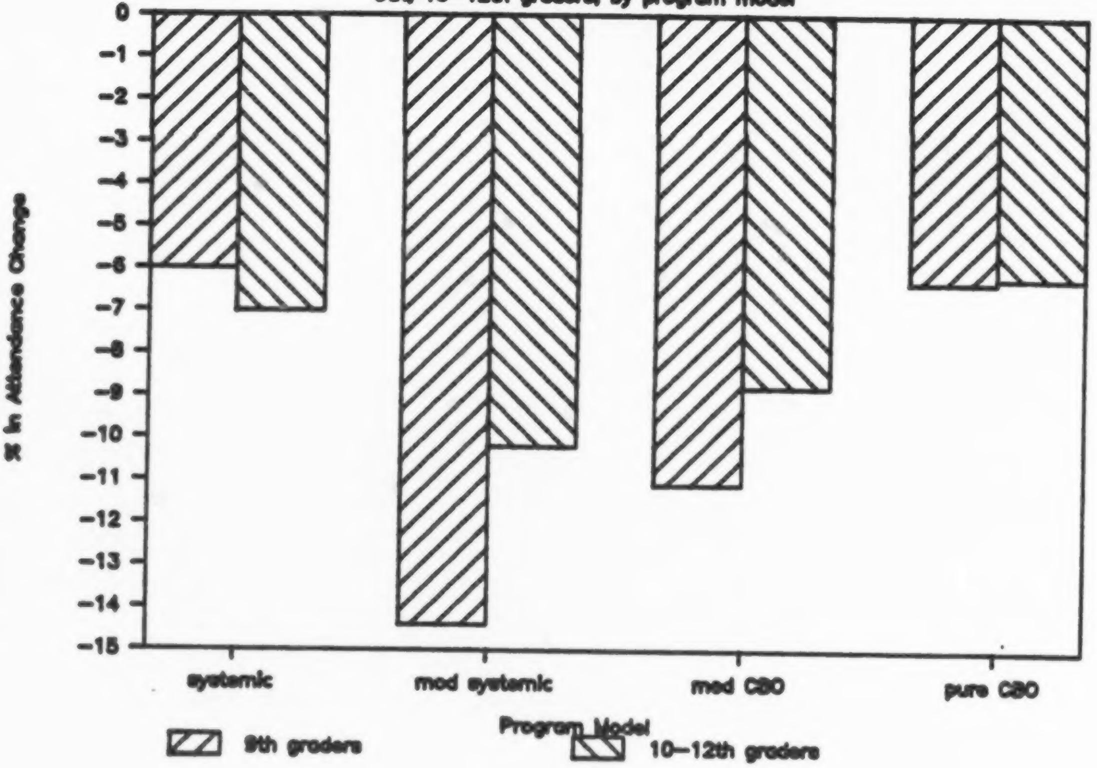
The data which are available certainly are suggestive, though. One base of comparison is an unpublished study of the attendance patterns of students entering 30 New York City high schools in 1979. This study showed that, for schools similar to those participating in the dropout prevention effort, the attendance declines of high risk students were quite comparable to those we have reported here. Among students absent 21 to 70 days in the first year of high school, the attendance of ninth graders fell approximately 10 percent, and the attendance of tenth graders fell about 8 percent. These figures are very close to the attendance declines reported for targeted ninth graders and tenth through twelfth graders at reasonably comparable levels of risk.

We also examined the overall attendance patterns in the Dropout Prevention Initiative middle schools and high schools. In the 1984-85 school year (prior to the onset of the program),

Fig. H-18

Change in % days attended,

9th, 10–12th graders, by program model



the average attendance rate in the 13 DPI high schools was 73.6%. During the same year, the average attendance rate in the 29 DPI middle schools was 82.2%. This suggests that the average decline in attendance for a student moving from one of the program middle schools to one of the program high schools when no program were in effect might be about 9%. While this is obviously a very crude calculation, it is consistent with the other evidence we have examined. Even if no program were in effect, we would expect a decline in the neighborhood of 9 or 10% in the attendance of students like those participating in the Dropout Prevention Initiative.

## Proportion of Subjects Passed

We also examined the course performance of targeted high school students. Because the number of courses taken varied across grade levels and schools, we do not report changes in the numbers of courses passed and failed, as these might be confounded with the total number of courses taken. Instead, we report changes in the proportion of subjects taken by targeted students which were passed successfully.

Figures H-19 and H-20 report changes over the program period in the proportion of subjects passed by targeted students in each school, for ninth graders and tenth through twelfth graders, respectively. Overall, targeted students passed 4.8% fewer courses during the dropout prevention program than before entering it. There was a substantial difference across grade levels, though, as ninth grade participants passed 8.9% fewer courses, while tenth through twelfth graders passed the same number as before entering the program.

In eleven of the thirteen high schools, the proportion of subjects passed by targeted ninth graders declined over the course of the program, and in several of these the declines were substantial. Only in Schools 1 and 10 did the proportion of subjects passed by targeted ninth graders increase. In five of the thirteen high schools, the average proportion of subjects passed by targeted ninth graders declined by at least 10 percentage points.

Among tenth through twelfth graders, school-to-school differences are more dramatic than the differences for ninth graders. Again, this is partly due to the comparatively small numbers of tenth through twelfth grade targeted students in some schools. Five of the thirteen schools show an increase in the proportion of subjects passed by targeted upper grade students, while eight show a decrease. The range from lowest to highest is very large, as targeted students in School 6 passed 51.6% fewer subjects during the program year than before, while targeted students in School 4 passed 20.3% more of their subjects than

Fig. H-19

Change in % subjects passed,

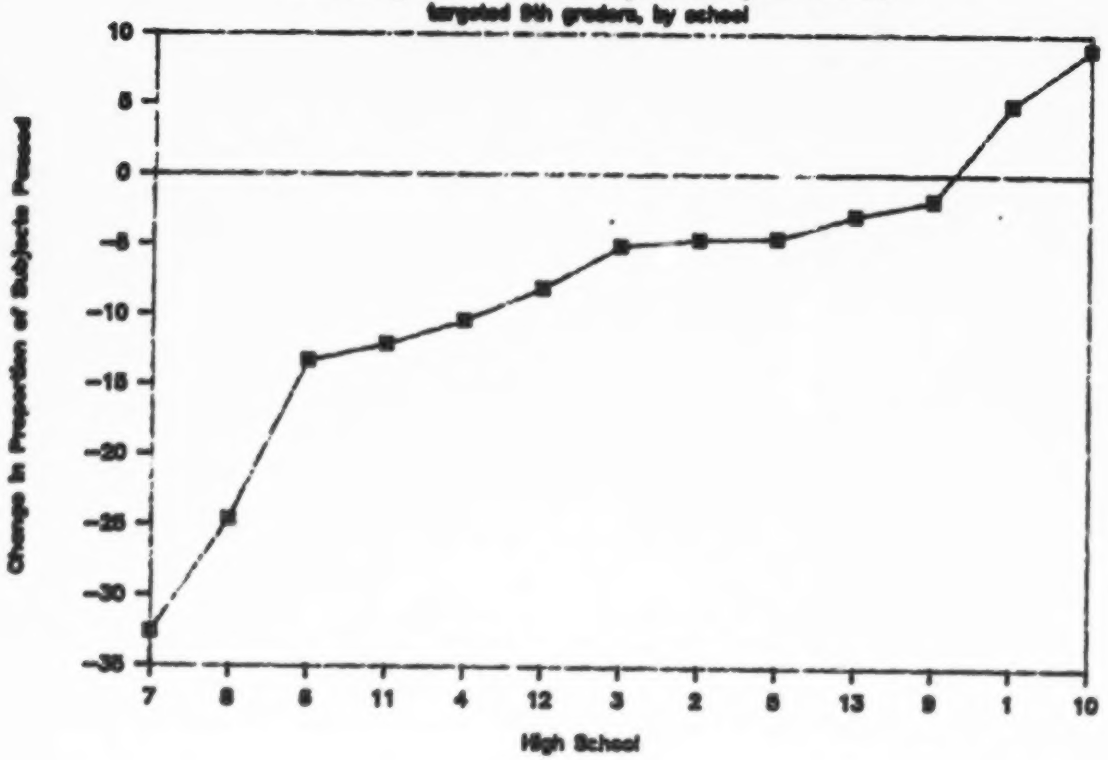
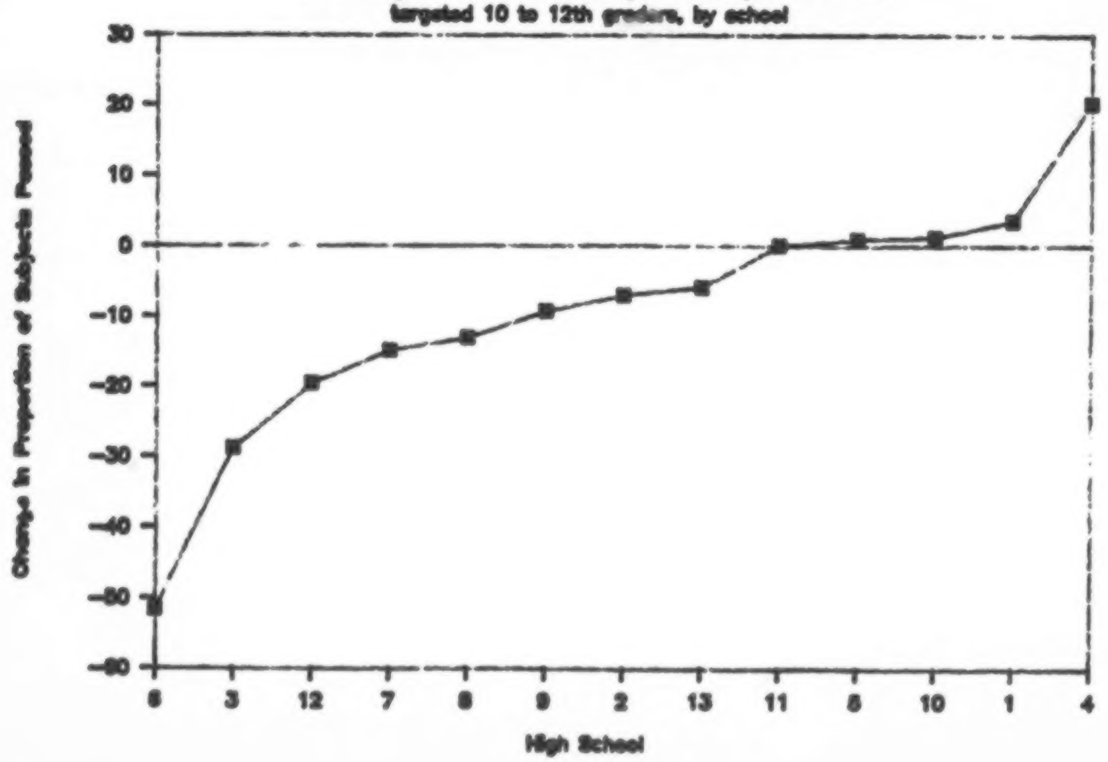


Fig. H-20

Change in % subjects passed,



before entry into the dropout prevention program.

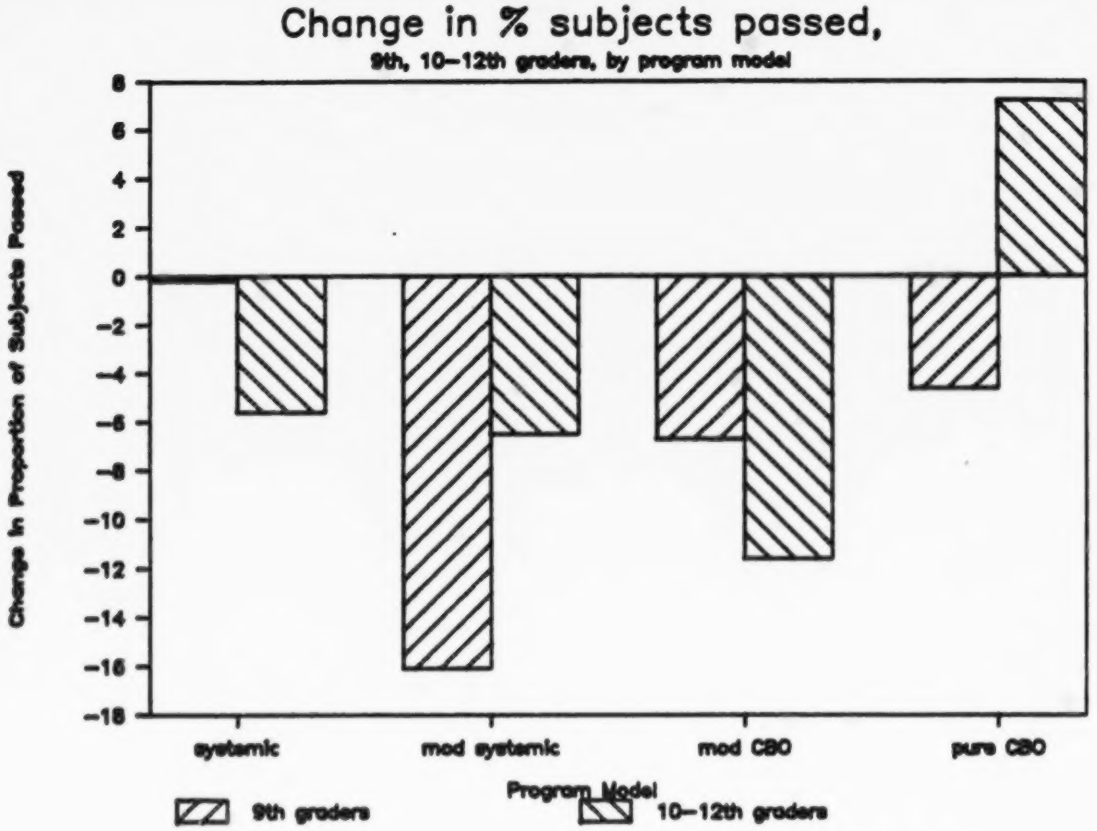
One possible explanation for why a decline is observed for ninth graders but not upper grade students is the difficulty in negotiating the transition to high school. Most of the ninth grade target population were students who were new to the high school, having been promoted from middle school in 1984-85. In contrast, many of the tenth through twelfth grade students were holdover students who had already made the transition to high school, and were at least minimally aware of what one needed to do to succeed in high school. It may be that incoming students were unprepared for the complexity of the high school and the academic demands that were made on them. We shall explore this hypothesis in the course of the second year of the evaluation.

Differences among program models in changes in the proportion of subjects passed show a similar pattern to the differences observed for attendance change among the models. Figure H-21 shows changes in the proportion of subjects passed during the program period by program model, separately for targeted ninth graders and upper grade students. Among ninth graders, students in systemic and pure CBO high schools had the smallest declines in the proportion of courses they were passing. Students in modified systemic high schools showed especially large drop-offs in their course performance.

Again, though, these effects may be due to regression effects. Recall that targeted students in pure CBO schools were the most at risk to begin with, based on their prior attendance.

Among tenth through twelfth grade students, the pure CBO model stands out. Targeted upper grade students in pure CBO high schools passed 7.2% more of their courses during the program period than before. In each of the other three program models, participating students passed a smaller proportion of their courses. Tenth through twelfth grade students in modified CBO schools passed, on average, 11.6% fewer of their courses during the program than before program entry.

Fig. H-21


Change in % subjects passed,
9th, 10–12th graders, by program model
Change in Proportion of Subjects Passed
8
6
4
2
0
−2
−4
−6
−8
−10
−12
−14
−16
−18
systemic
mod systemic
mod CBO
pure CBO
Program Model
9th graders
10–12th graders

## Characteristics of targeted middle school students

This section describes the characteristics of students participating in dropout prevention programs in the 29 middle schools in the study. A total of 4726 students were identified as program participants. Of these, 390 (8.2%) were special education students, for whom the available data are not directly comparable to the remaining 4336 students. For this reason, the bulk of the analyses pertain to those 4336 non-special education students.

The vast majority of these students entered the program in the fall semester. Only 6.8% of the total number of targeted youth were identified for services after the first of the year. Virtually all students were in the program until the end of the school year, as only about 5% of the students were discharged from the program before year end. The composition of the target group was evenly split by sex, as 51% of the group were male, and 49% female.

Students who were targeted for services were enrolled almost exclusively in the seventh, eighth and ninth grades. Figure M-1 shows the grade composition of targeted middle school students. Almost half of the targeted middle school youth were eighth graders. One-third were seventh graders, and one-fifth were ninth graders. A very small fraction, less than one-half of one percent, were identified as either sixth or tenth graders.

The modal age of targeted students was 14. Figure M-2 shows the age composition of the middle school target population. Slightly more than one-third of the target group was 14 years of age at program entry, and about one-quarter each were 13 years old and 15 years old, respectively. The remainder were either slightly younger (8.3% were 11 or 12), or slightly older (4.9% were 16 or above).

Middle school students targeted for services were a high risk population, according to the conventional wisdom about who drops out of school. Figure M-3 shows the distribution of absenteeism in the 1984-85 school year for targeted middle school students. About one-fifth of the target group was absent less than 20 days in the 1984-85 school year, the year prior to entry into the program. Some of these students were eligible for the program on the basis of poor attendance in the fall of 1985. Almost one-half of the target population was absent 20-39 days in the 1984-85 school year. About one-third of the middle school target group had been absent 40 or more days in that period, and about one in eight targeted students were absent 60 or more days in 1984-85.

Most students were passing more courses than they were failing at the time they entered the program. Figures M-4 and

Fig. M-1

Grade composition

targeted middle school students

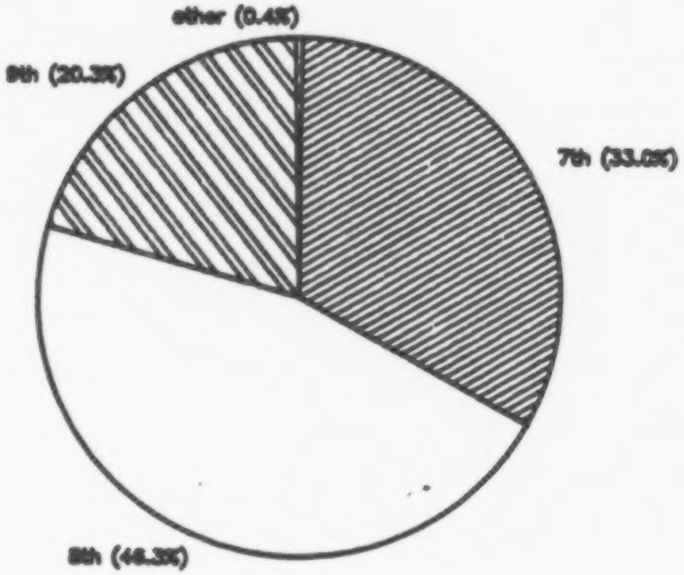


Fig. M-2

Age composition

targeted middle school students

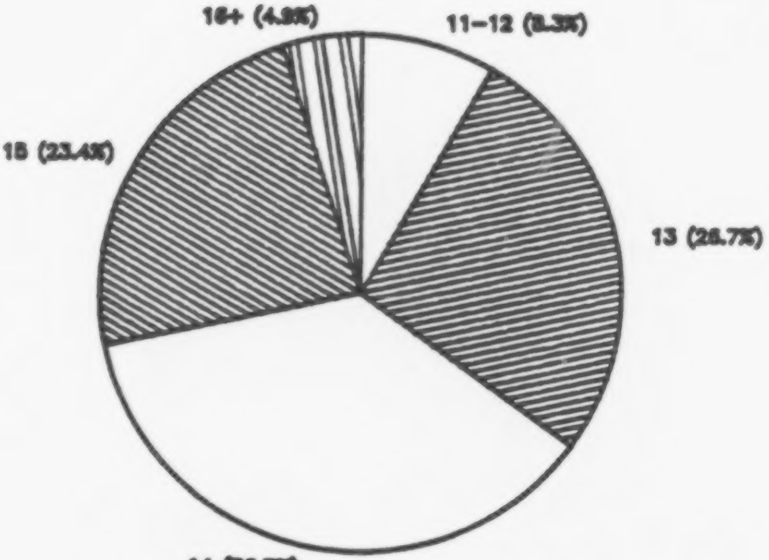
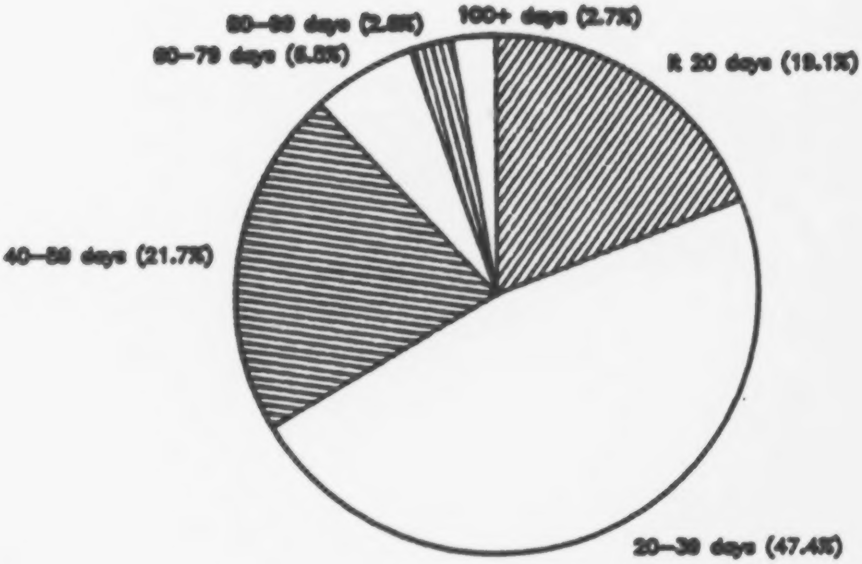


Fig. M-3

## Distribution of 1984–85 absenteeism

among targeted middle school students



M-5 show distributions of the numbers of subjects passed and failed, respectively, prior to program entry. Less than one-half of the targeted students were failing two or morse courses prior to their entry into the dropout prevention program. More than one-third were failing no courses at all in 1984-85. About one in six students were failing 4 or more subjects in 1984-85.

Conversely, more than one-half of the targeted students were passing three or fewer courses in the year prior to the program. Almost one-quarter were passing one or none of their courses. Nearly one-third were passing exactly four courses, and about one in seven passed five or more of their 1984-85 subjects.

The data supplied by the Office of Educational Assessment included a one-time indicator of whether a student had received each of seven dropout prevention services. Most middle school students were reported as receiving multiple dropout prevention services. Figure M-6 shows the proportion of the target middle school population reported by school personnel to receive each of the seven dropout prevention services. Almost all (94%) of the targeted youth received attendance outreach services. Most received guidance and counseling services (81%) and attendance incentives (73%). About half were reported to have been exposed to career education (54%) and health services (50%). Slightly more than one-third (35%) participated in school linkage activities. These figures suggest that the level of service delivery is high, particularly for attendance outreach and counseling, although clearly not all students are receiving all services. The greatest room for improvement is with regard to linkage activities. The figures do not inform us as to the quantity or quality of exposure to these various prevention services. The data we are collecting this year will be much more valuable for this purpose.

The students targeted for services in some middle schools were at greater risk of dropping out than the target groups in other middle schools, if prior attendance and course performance are credible indicators of risk level. Figure M-7 shows the average number of days absent in 1984-85, prior to program entry, for the targeted students in each school. The schools are arrayed on the X axis of the figure in ascending order according to the average number of days absent in 1984-85. Targeted students in School 39 had the best prior attendance, as they were absent an average of 25 days in the 1984-85 school year. In contrast, students in School 28 were absent about 45 days, on average, in 1984-85. Based on a school year of about 180 days, the target group in School 39 had an attendance rate prior to the onset of the program of 86%, while the target group in School 28 had an average prior attendance of about 75%. While these two schools represent the extremes, the remaining schools are distributed throughout the range separating them.

Fig. M-4

## Subjects failed prior to program,

targeted middle school students

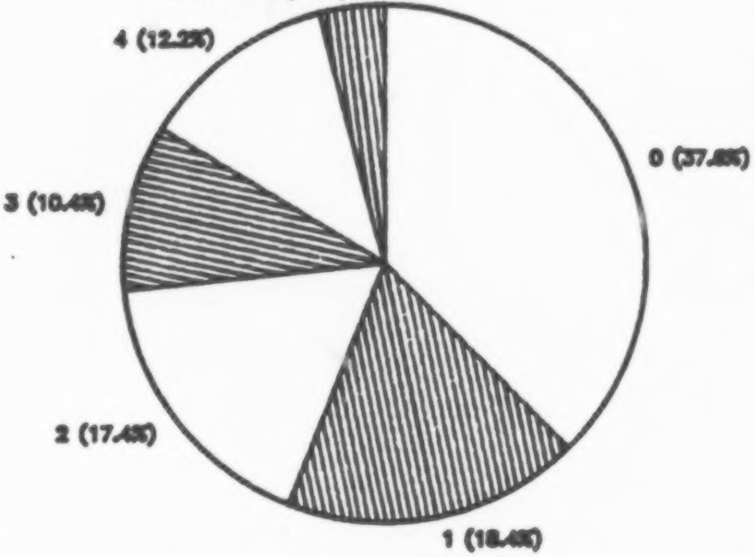


Fig. M-5

## Subjects passed prior to program,

targeted middle school students

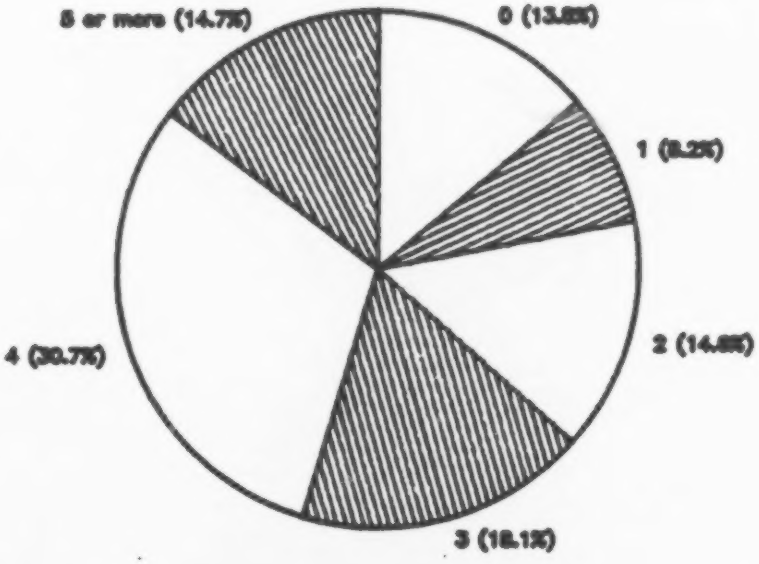


Fig. M-6

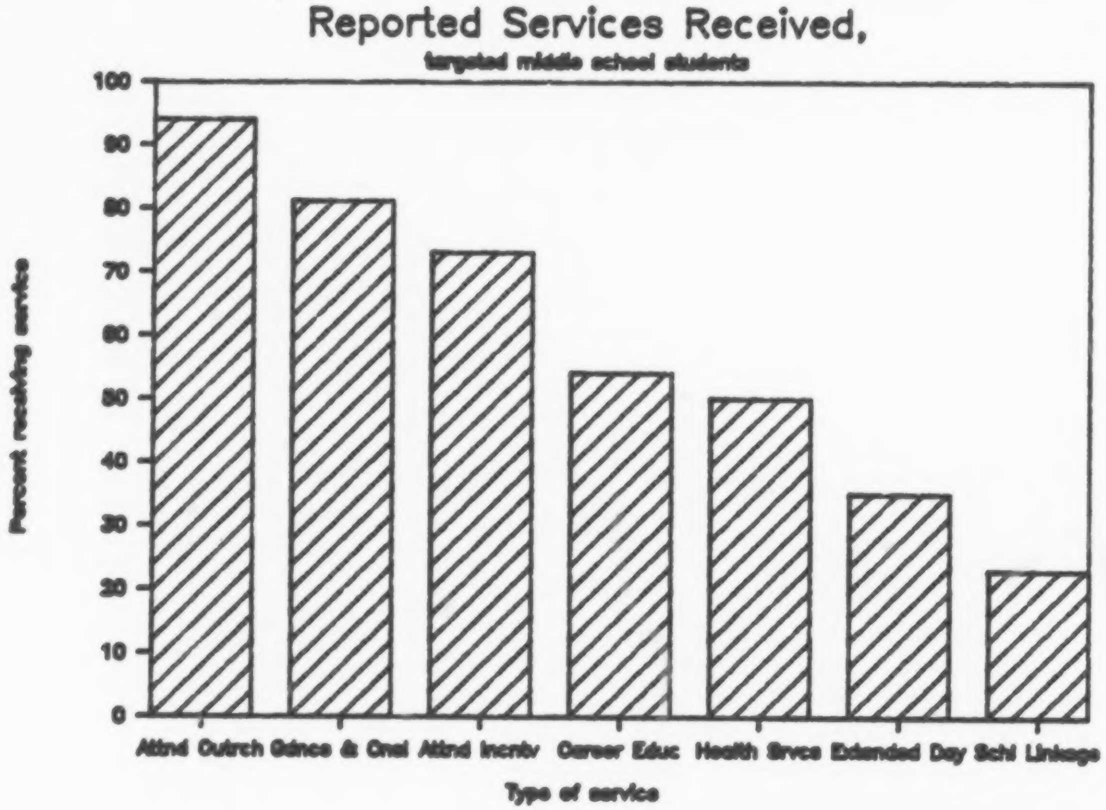

Reported Services Received,
targeted middle school students
Percent receiving service
100
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
Attnd Outrch
Gdnce & Cnsl
Attnd Incntv
Career Educ
Health Srvcs
Extended Day
Schl Linkage
Type of service

Fig. M-7

Avg % subjects passed prior to program

targeted middle school students

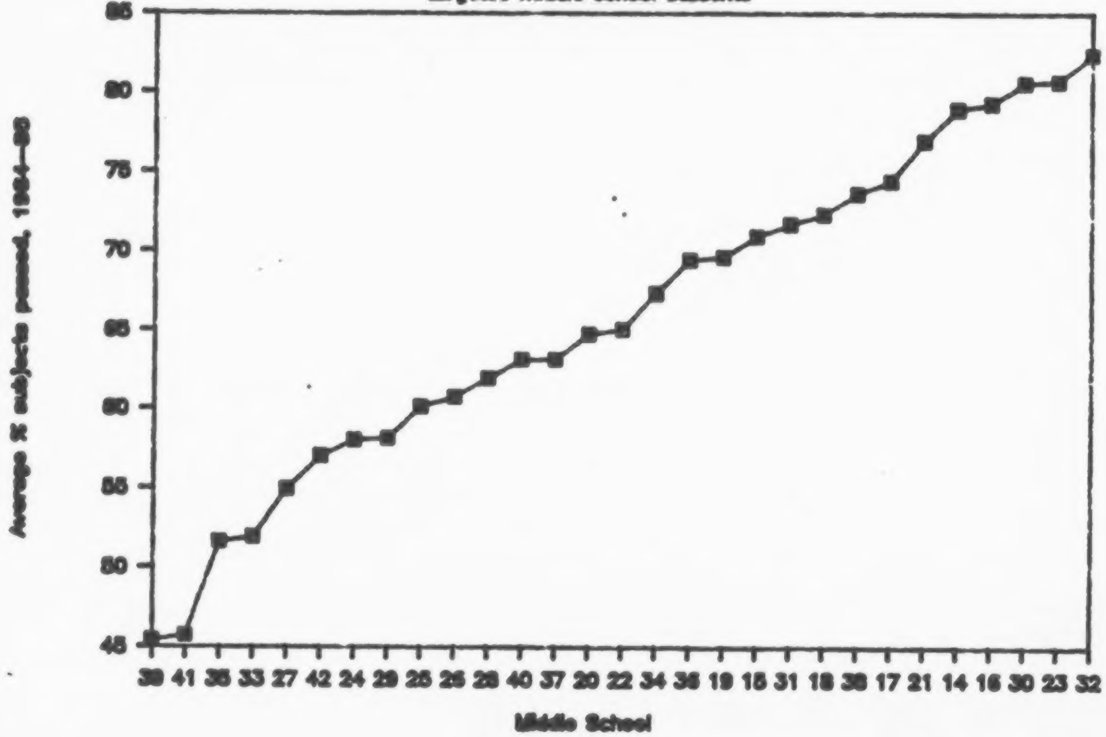


Fig. M-8

Days absent prior to program, by school

targeted middle school students

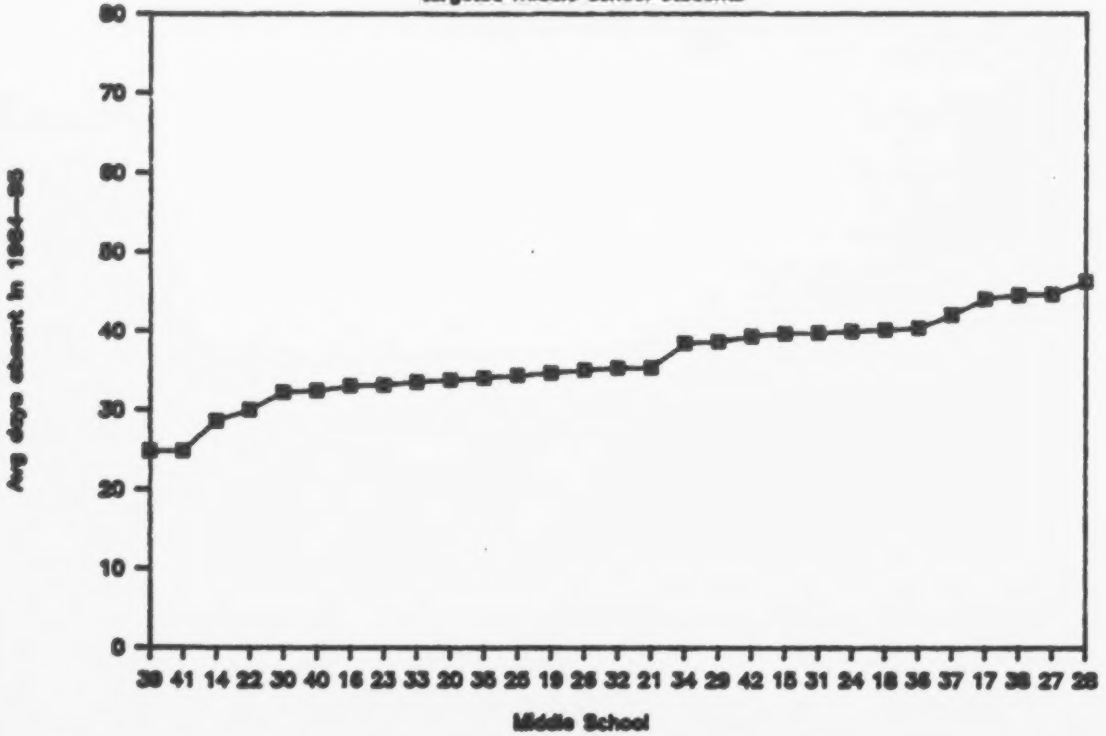


Fig. M-9

Change in % days present,

by middle school

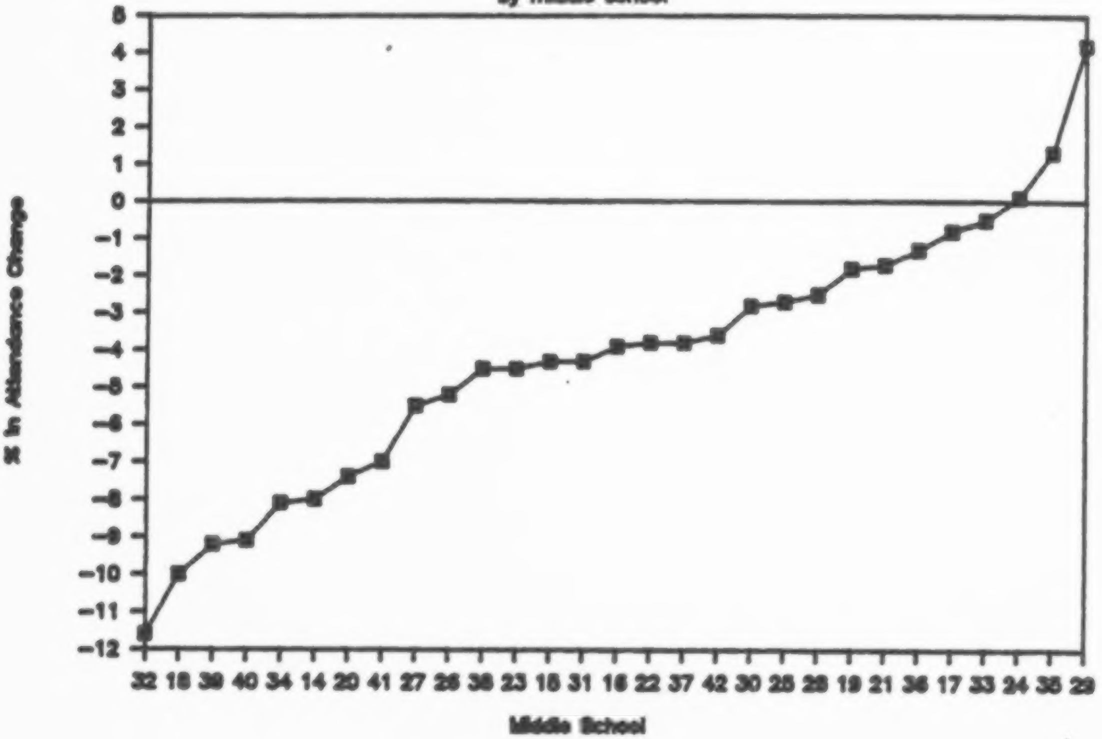
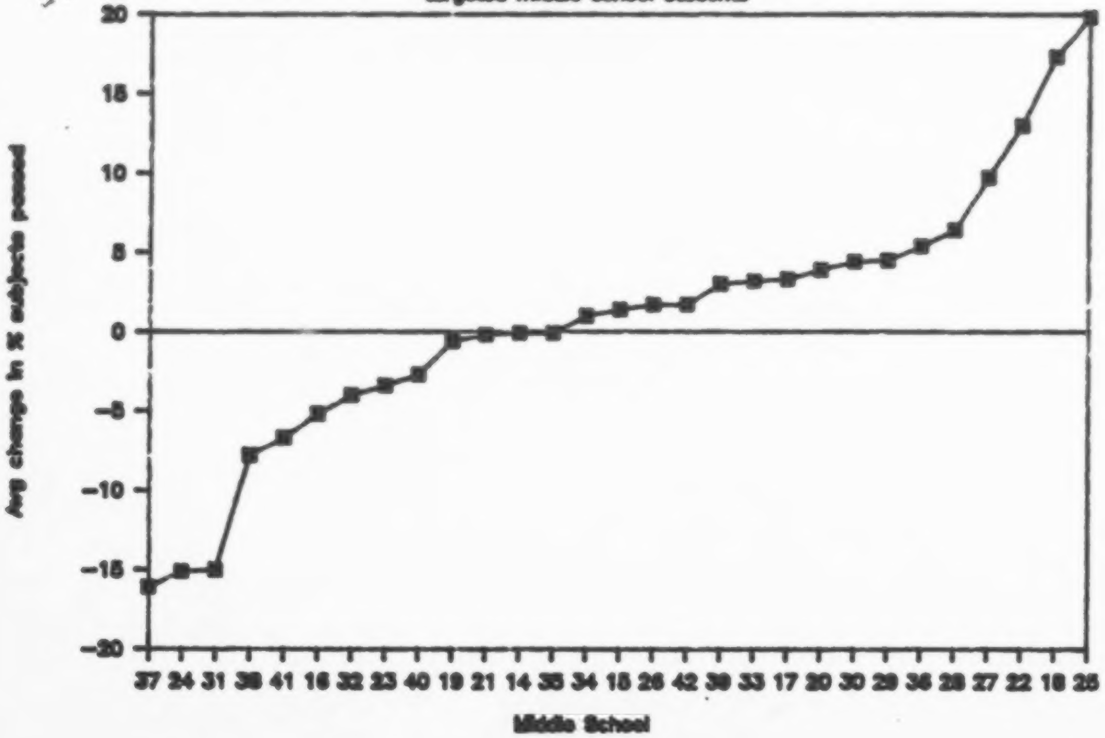


Fig. M-10

Change in % subjects passed, by school

targeted middle school students



The figures are even more striking when course performance is considered. Targeted students in some schools were passing much higher proportions of their courses than targeted students in other schools. Figure M-8 shows the average proportion of subjects passed by targeted students prior to program onset, for each middle school. In some schools, students were passing less than one-half of their courses, on average, before they entered the dropout prevention program. In others, targeted students were passing almost all of their courses. The school-level figures range from about 45%, in School 39, to over 80%, in School 32. There is a large gap between these two figures, and the remaining schools are distributed rather evenly throughout that gap. (Similar results, not displayed here, are observed for school-to-school differences in the number of subjects failed by targeted students in the preprogram period. In the highest-ranking school, targeted students failed on average about .7 courses in 1984-85. In the lowest-ranking school, the target group failed, on average, about 2.2 courses in that year. The variations across schools in the number of subjects taken by at risk students apparently account for the divergent rankings of schools for the average proportion of subjects passed and the average number of subjects failed by targeted students.)

Some schools are relatively high on one of these two risk criteria, but low on the other. Others are consistently high on both. As with the high schools, the point is that there is a range of input levels across schools. The middle schools in the dropout prevention program were serving different populations of students in the different schools. This finding will be especially important when differences in outcomes across schools are considered.

## Differences in Student Outcomes across Schools

Improvement in attendance is measured by the change in the attendance rate before program entry to the rate observed at the end of the first year program period in June 1986. For those students entering the program in fall 1985, attendance change is measured by the change in the proportion of days attended between the 1984-85 and 1985-86 school years.

Overall, the attendance of targeted middle school students participating in the dropout prevention program declined by 4.2%. The size of the declines was slightly greater among students in higher grades. The attendance of targeted seventh graders fell 3.2%, while that of targeted ninth graders declined 5.4%. The drop-off in eighth graders' attendance over the course of the program was 3.8%, which placed it between the seventh and ninth grade figures.

Attendance actually improved in only three schools of the 29 in the study, and in one of those the improvement was trivial. In several schools, the attendance of targeted students fell off considerably. Figure M-9 shows the change in the proportion of days attended by targeted students, for each of the 29 middle schools. As before, the schools are ordered from least improvement to best. At the lower end, the attendance of targeted youth in two schools declined more than 10%, while a great many schools were bunched in the range of a 5% decline in attendance.

Because of the variability across schools in the risk levels of participating students at the time they entered the dropout prevention program, it is difficult to make straightforward judgments about the relative impact on students of being enrolled in one school versus another. The discussion of regression effects developed in the high school section is applicable here as well. While there is considerable variability across schools in the attendance change of targeted youth, it is commensurate with the school-to-school differences in initial attendance.

Overall, targeted middle school students passed about 1.5% more of the courses they took during the program period than before. Figure M-10 shows changes in the proportion of subjects passed by targeted middle school students, for each middle school. The proportion of subjects passed increased in 16 middle schools, and declined in 10 middle schools. In three schools the proportion of subjects passed was essentially unchanged. The range of change within schools is considerable. In three schools, the proportion of subjects passed by targeted students declined by more than 15%, on average. At the other end of the range, targeted students passed at least 10% more of their courses in an additional three schools. The range of declines and improvements in the proportion of subjects passed is quite large, but again similar to the range of variation across schools in the initial proportions of subjects passed, on which the changes in Figure M-10 are based.

We also examined differences in student outcomes for the two middle school program models, Project Connect and CBO. The differences in outcomes between program models are, in our judgment, trivial. While CBO middle school students attended about 4.6% fewer days during the program than before, Project Connect students attended 3.7% fewer days, a difference of less than one percentage point. Similarly, the target population in CBO middle schools passed .9% more of their courses during the program period than before it began, while Project Connect middle school students passed 2.2% more of their courses than before program entry, a difference of just over one percentage point. In neither case are the differences between programs substantively meaningful.

## The Distribution of Services across Students

Students at different levels of risk had different likelihoods of receiving dropout prevention services. In several cases, the students least at risk, according to their prior attendance and course performance, were most likely to be served, while those targeted students most at risk were least likely to be served.

Figure M-11 reports the percentage of students with different levels of prior attendance receiving various dropout prevention services. The services examined are attendance outreach, incentives, guidance and counseling, health services, linkage services, career education, and extended day programs. The percentage of students reported to receive these various services is broken down for six categories of prior attendance, based on the number of days absent in the 1984-85 school year: 0-19 days absent, 20-39 days absent, 40-59 days absent, 60-79 days absent, 80-99 days absent, and 100 or more days absent. Recall from Figure M-3 that there are very few targeted students in the three highest categories, as about 86% of the target population are in the three lowest categories.

The very small number of highest risk students absent 100 or more days in 1984-85 consistently are the least likely to receive services. For six of the seven types of services examined, this group had the lowest recorded rate of being served by the dropout prevention program. In general, targeted middle school students absent 60 or more days in 1984-85 were noticeably less likely to receive services.

The differences among the three lowest risk categories are not usually particularly large, however. In the low-to-moderate risk range, students with more prior absences were less likely to participate in extended day programs, or to receive linkage or guidance services. On the other hand, these students were slightly more likely to receive health services. Again, we must emphasize that we have no information about the nature of these services, either with regard to the quantity of services delivered, or how well the services matched the needs of the target groups.

The patterns are somewhat different when the chance of receiving dropout prevention services is examined within categories of prior course performance. These results are shown in Figure M-12. Six categories of prior course performance are examined: zero subjects failed in 1984-85, one subject failed, two subjects failed, three subjects failed, four subjects failed, and five or more subjects failed in 1984-85. This last category represents but 5% of the total target group, but the other five categories each represent at least 10% of the total middle school target population.

Fig. M-11

Services received by MS students,

by number of prior absences

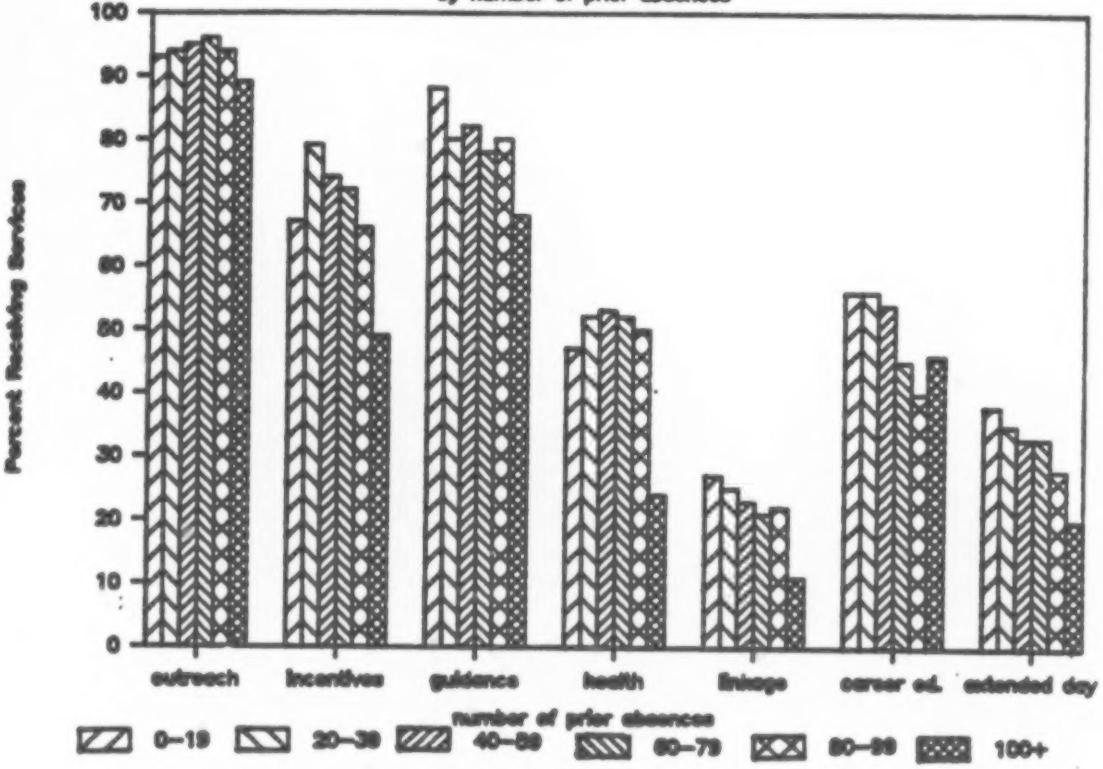
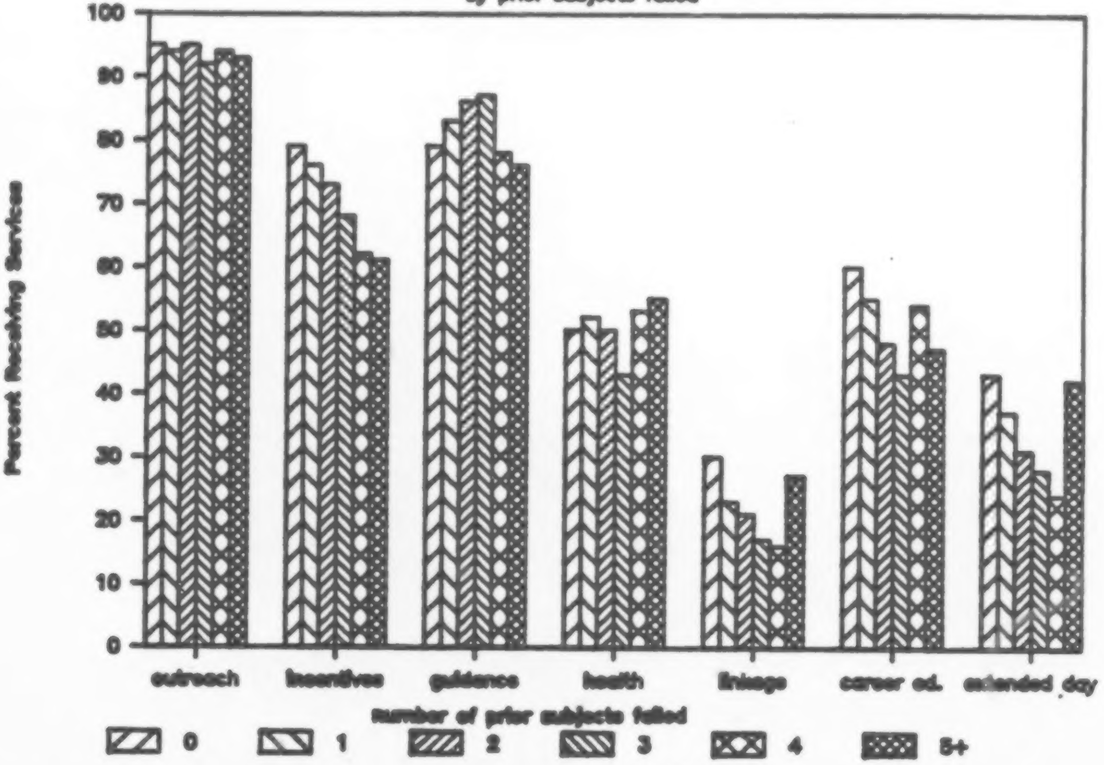


Fig. M-12

Services received by MS students,

by prior subjects failed



Once again, it appears that the students least at risk academically are the most likely to receive services, although the differences are not dramatic. For five of the seven dropout prevention services considered, students with zero prior course failures are the most likely to be served. Only for health and guidance services are the least at risk not the most likely to receive services.

For several outcomes, though, the most at risk are more apt to receive services, relative to their peers with just moderately poor performance. Students with five or more subject failures in 1984-85 had levels of extended day programs, linkage services and health services that were higher or nearly as high as the least at risk students. Conversely, they also had the lowest reported rates of guidance and incentive program participation. The pattern is a complex one, and is difficult to summarize concisely. In few cases are the differences remarkably large.

## The Relationship between Services Received and Student Outcomes

Having looked at the relationship between student outcomes and student characteristics, and reported services received and student characteristics, there is a natural curiosity about the relationship between student outcomes and reported services received. Is there any evidence that students receiving dropout prevention services have more positive academic outcomes after receiving those services?

The answer to this question is not hard to determine. Students receiving dropout prevention services uniformly had smaller attendance declines than students not receiving services. This was true for attendance outreach, guidance and counseling services, health services, linkage programs, extended day programs and career education and incentive programs. In addition, targeted middle school students receiving health services increased the proportion of subjects they passed successfully more so than did targeted youth who did not receive health services.

These effects are not independent, however. Students receiving one service also were more likely to receive one or more of the others as well. The apparent effects of linkage programs, for instance, might be due to the fact that most students in linkage programs also were in extended day programs. Looking at services on a one-by-one basis does not reveal the independent effects of receiving a given service on student outcomes.

It is much easier to determine that students receiving services are performing better than students not receiving services than to conclude that the dropout prevention services are in fact the cause of the improved performance. To draw such a conclusion requires that plausible alternative hypotheses be ruled out.

The key alternative hypothesis that must be rejected is that it is not the dropout services that account for improved performance, but rather the differences among students in their initial characteristics that make the difference. We have seen above that students with different risk levels have different likelihoods of receiving dropout prevention services. We have also shown that changes in student performance are associated with the initial level of student risk, due to the phenomenon of regression to the mean. In order to conclude that dropout services make a difference, we must rule out the chance that the level of initial risk is what makes the difference.

We are not convinced that this is possible with the data available to us, but we did make a crude attempt. We regressed the change in attendance over the program period on 1984-85 attendance and a vector of dummy variables indicating whether targeted students received each of seven dropout prevention services: attendance outreach, incentive programs, guidance and counseling, health services, linkage programs, career education, and extended day programs. We cannot be certain that merely controlling on initial attendance will adequately compensate for either regression artifacts or differential propensities to receive dropout services which might be correlated with attendance outcomes, but this seemed to be the best available design to address the problem of interest.

The regression results generally support the claim that dropout prevention services have positive effects on student attendance, at least among this population of high risk middle school youth. Net of initial attendance, and holding the other dropout services constant, students who participated in linkage programs had a 3.4 percentage point smaller decrease in attendance over the program year than students who did not participate in such programs. Also, students receiving attendance incentives had a 3.3 percentage point smaller decline in attendance during the program than comparable students who did not receive incentives. In fact, the net effects of receiving health services, participating in extended day programs, and participating in career education programs also had positive, significant effects on attendance, ranging from 1.4 percentage points for health services and career education, to 1.9 percentage points for extended day programs. Only attendance outreach, which had such little variation (roughly 95% of all students received services), and guidance and counseling services failed to attain significance.

A similar analysis was performed for the change in the proportion of subjects passed during the program year. This change was regressed on the initial proportion of subjects passed in 1984-85, and a vector of dummy variables indicating service delivery. The results, while more checkered than those for the attendance analysis, support the conclusion that dropout prevention services may improve classroom performance.

Participating in attendance incentive and school linkage programs, and receiving health services all have positive, significant effects on changes in the proportion of subjects successfully passed by targeted middle school students. Students receiving attendance incentives improved the number of courses they passed during the program by, on average, 4.6% more than did similar students not receiving incentives. Students in school linkage programs improved the proportion of courses they passed over the program year by 3.3% more than comparable students not in linkage programs. Additionally, students receiving health services increased the rate at which they passed courses by 2.2% more than did similarly situated students who did not receive health services.

The only discordant note in this analysis is the depressant effect of guidance and counseling services on changes in course performance. The regression analysis indicates that, everything else being equal, students who received guidance and counseling services during the program year passed four percent fewer courses during the program period than before, relative to students who did not receive guidance and counseling services. It is unlikely that that receiving guidance and counseling actually contributed to students passing a lower percentage of their courses. A more likely explanation is that academic or personal problems account for why some students both received counseling and passed fewer courses.

The catch is that we cannot measure these problems with the available data, and thus cannot test this other hypothesis. But if the hypothesis of unmeasured differences among targeted students is a plausible explanation for the apparent negative effects of guidance counseling on students' course performance, it is an equally plausible explanation for the apparent positive effects of other services on academic outcomes. There are other plausible alternative hypotheses as well, especially the possibility that the observed effects of services are really school or program effects. We thus regard these analyses as suggestive, not conclusive; and look forward to improved measurement of both student characteristics and the actual services delivered to students to help us unravel the relationships between the dropout prevention services received by students and their academic accomplishments.

## ENDNOTES

1. Two sources of attendance data on high school students were provided by the Board of Education to the evaluation staff. One type derives from the Student Information Services (SIS) computerized data system, while the other is from forms circulated by the Office of Educational Assessment (OEA) to staff in the program high schools, who completed them for each targeted student. For some students, attendance data were available from one source but not the other. for others, data were available from both sources.

For those students with data from both sources, the correlation between the OEA data and the SIS data was unacceptably low. When apparent irregularities in the OEA data in School 5 were taken into account, the correlation between the OEA and SIS data was considerably higher. While the attendance correlations were lower than would be desired, there was little evidence of bias in estimates of group means from using one source rather than the other. This is discussed further below.

Because of the gaps and differences in the two sources of data, two imputation procedures were used to construct 1984-85 and 1985=86 attendance data. One used OEA data as the baseline, so that students with valid OEA data were assigned the OEA attendance values. For those students lacking valid OEA data, the SIS data were substituted if available. A case was thus missing only if both OEA and SIS data were missing for that case.

The second strategy used SIS data as a baseline, and substituted valid OEA data when valid SIS data were unavailable. As above, a case was missing only if both OEA and SIS data were missing for that case.

Because of the uncertainties regarding the OEA data in School 5, only SIS data were used in constructing attendance figures in that school. For the remaining schools, the proportion of days present in 1984-85 and 1985-86 were compared school by school for the two sets of attendance figures. Only in School 10 were the implications of the two attendance measures substantially discrepant, with the OEA-priority data implying a 2.5% decline in attendance over the program period, and the SIS-priority data implying an 8.2% decline in attendance over that period. In spite of this discrepancy, the comparisons among program models were consistent regardless of which data source was accorded priority. For this reason, and to minimize confusion, the figures reported in the text and figures for high school attendance use OEA data as the primary data source for all schools except School 5, for which SIS data were used as the sole data source.

2. The data reported here refer to the proportion of subjects passed and failed, and specifically not to the number of credits earned toward high school graduation. Course performance data were reported in a variety of formats. Some sources of data reported the number of courses passed and failed in both fall and spring, while others reported the number of courses passed and failed for the entire school year. To make these numbers comparable, we took the average of the sum of fall and spring passes and failures. While this is a reasonable strategy for making the data comparable for analytic purposes, it does not indicate directly how much progress students are making toward earning their high school diplomas. Students passing only three courses per semester would need roughly seven years to accumulate enough credits to graduate. This suggests that most of the students in the high school target population are making very little progress toward graduation, even at the end of the program period.

3. We did correlate the level of implementation with student outcomes, for both high schools and middle schools. Rank order correlations, using Kendall's tau-b, were computed for two measures of student outcomes - change in attendance rate and change in proportion of subjects passed - against various program measures. We analyzed high schools and middle schools separately, and the two middle school models, Project Connect and CBO.

Among the program high schools, changes in student performance were unrelated to measures of program implementation. High school outcome data were compared to four program measures -- level of implementation, number of problems encountered in its setting-up and running, per capita expenditure on guidance and counseling and per capita expenditure on alternative education. None of the correlations was statistically significant, either with attendance outcomes -- for which both OEA and SIS data were analyzed -- or with academic achievement as measured by the proportion of subjects passed.

Similar results were observed for middle schools. Middle school outcome data were compared to level of implementation, numbers of students enrolled in the program, attendance outreach as measured in terms of number of recorded "contacts", similar measures of guidance counseling, and problems in setting-up and running the program. These five measures were compared with two outcomes in each of the three middle school groups, generating thirty correlations. Of these, only one correlation, between guidance and counseling and change in attendance in the Project Connect schools, attained the .05 significance level. Because of the number of correlations considered, though, this might have occurred due to chance alone, and is not, therefore, discussed further.

# CHAPTER FIVE
## RESULTS FROM THE STUDENT SURVEY

In May and June, 1986, a questionnaire was administered in all the schools in the Dropout Prevention Initiative. The intended respondents were all targeted students in the middle schools and the entire 9th and 10th grade enrollment of the high schools. (Details about the survey and its administration are given in Chapter 7.)

Response rates were quite low, mainly because the questionnaire was administered so late in the school year. Only 8365 high school students completed questionnaires, 42% of the eligible enrollment. The response rate was much lower among the targeted high school students, with 680 responses, only about 12% of the number of targeted students. The low response rates are due first of all to the large number of absences during the late spring when the questionnaires were administered. During the entire school year the average attendance rate of all high school students is only 70%. The attendance rate during the year is lower for students in 9th and 10th grades and is lower during June, when our questionnaires were mainly administered. Since targeted students tend to have much lower attendance rates, the attendance rate of targeted students at the time of our questionnaire was probably below 30%.

In addition, we lost other respondents because the questionnaire was not administered in every classroom and a number of students filled out their identification numbers incorrectly, making it impossible for us to determine whether they are targeted students or not. Targeted students appear to be difficult to reach under the best of circumstances. One school went to great lengths to attract students to school, rewarding them with T-shirts and generally making an all out effort to obtain responses; that school's response rate overall was only 69% and only 35% of its targeted students responded and supplied correct ID's. This was the smallest high school and therefore, presumably had the least administrative difficulty with the questionnaire. The seven largest high schools had a median response rate of only 36% of the student body and 7% of the targeted students; the smaller six schools had median rates of 52% and 16%.

In the middle schools, only targeted students were surveyed. We collected 1578 useable questionnaires, 36% of the middle school targeted population. In all of the passages that follow, it must be remembered that the targeted student respondents are a more selected sample of the population of all targeted students than the non-targeted students are of their population. We must be aware that these low response rates mean we are probably reading the responses of the least "risky" of our high risk targeted students. These, after all, are the students who did make it to school at the end of the school year. Thus, any differences in the high school between targeted and non-targeted students are likely to be understated.

With these low response rates, some scientists might argue that the survey should not be analyzed at all. This is, we are certain, incorrect. It is true that the survey gives a biased impression of the average targeted student; but if we keep in mind that we have the "better" targeted students, the data helps us form a picture of the students the program is trying to serve. We can also compare the targeted high school students to untargeted students, keeping in mind that differences that appear will be understated. And when we do not see any difference between targeted and untargeted students, it is likely that even if we had all targeted students in our survey we would not see a large difference.

The other analysis we can do with this low response rate is to compare schools and models to each other. Since all schools will have a similar bias due to absences and failures in survey administration, any large difference we find between schools would probably still exist if we had a large response rate.

## Characteristics of Targeted Students

We have heard people express concern that schools, being pressured to produce results, might have tried to select students who would do well in the program--students whose prior excessive absenteeism was due to a serious illness rather than to a pattern of chronic voluntary absenteeism, for example. According to the survey responses, the targeted students in fact do seem to be those most at risk. They are older: the targeted high school students in the 9th and 10th grade average 16 years 11 months in age compared to the total 9th and 10th grade average of 16 years 5 months. The targeted junior high school students appear to be about 4 months over the average age also. There was a large difference in family composition. Only 39% of the targeted high school students have a father or step-father present, compared to 53% of the non-targeted students. With these sample sizes the targeted students usually must differ from the untargeted by 4% to be statistically significant ($p<.05$). Only 20% of the targeted middle school students live with both natural parents. However, there is no evidence that the targeted students come from educationally more impoverished backgrounds: 53% report that they know their mothers to have at least a high school diploma, exactly the same as the response of the overall population in these schools. The targeted students are just as likely to have a typewriter or home computor as are other students in the school (8% of the students have each). The most plausible conclusions are that the unsurveyed targeted students also come disproportionately from one-parent households and also have mothers who are approximately as well as educated as the mothers of targeted students.

The targeted high school students do not come disproportionately from a migrant population. Sixty-seven percent of the targeted students have received all their schooling in the New York metropolitan area, exactly the same as non-targeted students.

The popular image of the high-risk student is that of a sort of latch-key child with very little family support. Judging from the students' responses, this is far from the truth. About as many of the targeted high school students as non-targeted students report that their family helps them with their homework (50% versus 54%); 64% of the targeted middle school students say they get help. Thirty-three percent of the targeted high school students say that someone often checks to see if their homework is done, which is only 4 percentage points lower than that of non-targeted students. Thirty-six percent of the targeted students say that their family often talks to them about college. This is noticeably lower than the 47% response of non-targeted students, but this probably just reflects the poor academic performance of the targeted students, who are less obviously college-bound. The targeted students are slightly more likely to report that their families talk to them about possible jobs after high school (44% versus 40% non-targeted students).

The targeted students do not complain about disliking school. They are as likely to say that their math class is "fun" (56% versus 53% for non-targeted students) and as likely to say that their English class is "fun"--(71% versus 72% for the non-targeted students). The high school percentages are similiar to the middle school percentages in math but a smaller percentage of targeted middle school students say that English is "fun"--57%. One question invites students to characterize the relationship between themselves and their school as being like members of the same family, being friends, distant relatives, strangers or enemies. Twenty-seven percent of the targeted high school students choose the words enemies or strangers, compared to 23% of the non-targeted students. Similarly, the targeted high school students are not much more likely to say they forget to bring paper and pencil to class than are other students (18% of targeted students versus 15% of non-targeted students say this about math class; the percentages for English are 16 and 15). Another question asks students to select which staff person in the school is the one they can talk to about personal matters most easily and one possible answer is that there is no one in the school. Only 24% of the targeted high school students say this, compared to 23% of the untargeted students.

In general, we are left with the impression that the targeted students either do genuinely like school or are reluctant to admit that they do not. It is true that 55% of the students respond by agreeing with the statement "most of the time I don't want to come to school" but nearly as many (51% versus 55%) of the non-targeted students say the same thing. The percentages are somewhat higher among junior high school students--63% of the targeted junior high school students say this.

The targeted students do get into trouble more than non-targeted students. They are not more likely to have gotten into a fight during the term--exactly 16% of both targeted and non-targeted students report being in a fight. But, they are more likely to say that they have stayed away from school because they were suspended; 16% versus 8% of non-targeted students (significant). Targeted students are also less likely to say that the school rules are often fair--only 21% say this as compared to 28% of the non-targeted students (significantly lower), which suggests that the students are more likely to have been accused of violating rules. Since junior high schools generally have higher levels of violence than high schools, it is no surprise that the targeted middle school students are more likely to have been in a fight (39%) or suspended (23%).

One thesis sometimes suggested is that some dropouts are pushed out of school because of their inability to avoid being attacked by other students. However, we have noted that the targeted students are not more likely to have been in a fight, and in response to other questions they are not more likely to report having had something stolen from them (32% say this, exactly the same as the non-targeted students). Only 29% of the targeted high school students say they avoid some part of the school because it is not safe, slightly lower than the 32% response of the non-targeted high school students. The targeted junior high school students are slightly more likely to say they avoid unsafe areas (32%, 3% higher than the 29% given by targeted high school students) and more likely to report having had something stolen (41% versus 32%). Twelve percent of the targeted high school students report feeling pressured by other students to use drugs and 9% report feeling pressure to have sex, compared to 7% and 8% of the non-targeted students respectively (the target/nontarget difference is significant for the drug question). The targeted junior high school students give about the same percentage, 11% feeling pressured about drugs and 10% feeling pressured about sex.

The high risk students do show one way in which they are noticably different from other students--they are more likely to act in an "adult" manner. The largest single difference between the targeted and non-targeted students is in smoking--21% of the targeted students smoke daily compared to only 9% of the non-targeted students. They are also slightly more likely to be working more than 15 hours a week--15% of the targeted students say this compared to 12% of the non-targeted students (not significant at the .05 level). This is not to suggest that working will necessarily lead to leaving school, although it sometimes does. In fact, a common strategy of dropout prevention in these high schools is to help students find part-time jobs which they can hold while going to school. Finally, 7% of the targeted high school students have a child, compared to 3% of non-targeted high school students (significant). Four percent of the targeted middle school students report having a child.

The targeted students are clearly more peer-oriented than other high school students. When asked what they do after school only 42% say they watch TV at home and only 32% say they help out at home, compared to 47% and 37% respectively for non-targeted students. At the same time, they are more likely to be with peers. Twenty-six percent say they are often at a friend's house and 38% say they often "hang out" with friends, compared to 19% and 34% for non-targeted students. Not surprisingly, the target students refer to their best friends as being a bit of a bad influence with 21% saying that their best friend cuts school often; only 12% of non-targeted students say this (all differences significant).

The targeted students are of course absent more often and given a choice of reasons for absence select every reason more often than do non-targeted students. While 75% of non-targeted students say they missed a day of school this term because they were sick, 83% of the targeted students say the same. Whereas 6% of the non-targeted students say they miss school because they had to work, 13% of the targeted students say this. Twenty-seven percent of the non-targeted and 38% of the high risk students said they had to stay home to take care of some member of the family. In addition, the high-risk students more often stayed away from school because they were having trouble with school. In addition to being suspended, 12% said they stayed away because they didn't have their homework done and 13% because they were in trouble with some member of the school staff (the non-targeted students give these two reasons 8% of the time each). But the largest differences are in the purely voluntary reasons for absenteeism: 30% of the targeted students said they stayed away from school because they wanted to do something with their friends and 46% said they stayed away from school simply because they didn't feel like going. The non-targeted students give these answers only 18% and 31% of the time respectively. (All differences in this paragraph are significant.)

## The Implementation of the Dropout Prevention Program

Although in many schools the community based organization kept a low profile, it was clear that a sizable number of students were aware that the services they were receiving were being provided by an outside organization. We asked the students to agree or disagree with the statement "the school is working with a neighborhood or community organization to improve education here." We had 25 or more responses from 5 of the 7 high schools which were operating with models 2 or 3--the full CBO program and the modified CBO program--and about 53% of the targeted students answered agreeing to the statement. In four of the five schools, the targeted students were more likely to say this than were non-targeted students. In contrast, in the schools using a systemic or modified systemic method of attacking the dropout problem, 39% of targeted students said a community organization was working with the school, but in five schools out of six the targeted students were less likely than other students to be aware of a relationship with some community organization. It seems likely that every high school has some sort of relationship with some community organization, given the large numbers of different kinds of programs which high schools operate. It seems likely that targeted students, being not as integretated into the school as the untargeted students, are probably less aware of most things in the school. Therefore, the fact that they are more aware than other students of the presence of a community-based organization which is providing dropout services indicates that they are aware that the services they personally are receiving are coming from that organization.

The most common program component being provided is a set of attendance services. The targeted students are more likely than other high school students to report that when a student is absent for a day, the school will call his home: 51% of targeted students say this compared to 42% of non-targeted students. Sixty percent of the targeted students, but only 39% of the non-targeted students will say that a teacher will tell them what they have missed after being away from the school for a day. Similarly, we asked what the school did when the student was repeatedly absent and 30% of the targeted students, compared to only 14% of the non-targeted students, said that someone would visit their home. Asked about absenteeism services they personally have received, 45% of the targeted students (compared to 29% of the non-targeted students) say that a staff person has talked to them about their absences and 28% (compared to 16%) say they have been invited to a meeting with other students to talk about absence.

Of course, these statistics on services received by targeted students might not seem as high in relation to program goals as in proportion to services received by non-targeted students.

Another commonly used strategy is to provide students with incentives, usually prizes for improved attendance. It is difficult to target this sort of program to the worst students, because they are likely not to be the ones whose attendance will show improvement. In fact, 33% of the targeted high school students received a prize for improved attendance, but 38% of non-targeted students received such a prize. It is true that 69% of the targeted students know someone who received a prize so that the possibility of receiving one must not seem too remote to most targeted students.

These programs seem to be more extensive in middle schools than in high schools. Forty-six percent of middle school targeted students say that someone will call home if the student is absent for a day and 62% say that a teacher will tell them what work they have missed. Forty-six percent say that someone will visit a student's home if they are repeatedly absent, a percentage much higher than the 30% reported by high school students. Fifty percent of the middle school students say that someone has talked to them about their absences and 32% say they have attended a meeting with other students to talk about absences. Fifty percent of targeted middle school students say they have received a prize for improved attendance and 74% say they know a friend who has.

## Differences Among Schools and Between Models

In the remainder of this section we will analyze the extent of the differences among the schools and the amount of differences between models on various survey responses.

The ten figures that follow each analyze a different variable:
(The figures analyze data for both middle schools and high schools unless specifically noted.)

Figure 1: The percentage of students or student receiving, or having friends receive, awards for improved attendance.

Figure 2: The extent students like their school.

Figure 3: The extent students feel the school is not concerned about them.

Figure 4: The percentage of students in sports or clubs.

Figure 5: The percentage of students in after-school tutoring programs.

Figure 6: The extent of career education received by students.

Figure 7: The extent to which middle schools students have contact with the high school serving their neighborhood.

Figure 8: The amount of conflict students have with other students or with school officials.

Figure 9: The extent students say other students in the school are disruptive.

Figure 10: The percentage of students who report staying away from school voluntarily.

Since all the figures have the same format, we will describe in detail only figure 1. Figure 1 shows the responses of students in each school to two questions about whether they personally have received a prize for improved attendance and whether any of their friends have--the figure plots the average of the two percentages for each school. The percentage of students who know a friend who has received a prize is always larger than the percentage who have received one personally, but the two responses are correlated--people who receive prizes are more likely to know someone else who has. Thus, taking the average of the two response gives a more accurate measure of the degree to which students see their school as rewarding improvement in attendance than would using either question by itself. The average of two percentages is similar to a simple percentage itself, in the sense that if the targeted students in high school "A" averaged 64.1 on this pair of questions, while those in school "B" averaged only 25.1, this is very similar to saying that if we wrote a new single question about attendance prizes to which 64% of the students in school "A" answered "yes," then we could expect about 25% of the students in school "B" to answer "yes."

Figure 1, like all the other figures, answers the following questions:

(a) What is the mean score of targeted students in schools using each model? Differences between models might reflect on the type of program or its effectiveness.

(b) What is the range of scores among different schools? This is important for two reasons: it gives us a sense of how much schools can, or do, differ differ in awarding prizes; and how much differences between models can be considered due merely to chance because of the variation among schools.

The variation among schools is also summarized in Figure 1 by the interquartile range, standardized by the standard deviation of the variable in each case. To do this we have simply ranked the schools by the average score on the prize scale, selected the schools at the 25th and 75th percentiles (the third school from the bottom and the third school from the top in the case of the high schools) and computed the difference between the two schools, divided by the standard deviation of the variable. In this case the standard deviation of the prize variable is .39, and the difference between the school which is third from the bottom and the one third from the top is 20%, so the interquartile range is one-half of a standard deviation. Standardizing the interquartile ranges is done to make it possible to compare the range on one question or scale to responses on another. The interquartile ranges vary from a minimum of .2 standard deviations to a high of .5 standard deviations.

For high schools, the figure also shows whether the targeted students scored higher or lower than the untargeted student in their high school who also answered the questionnaire. The score for the targeted students in a particular school is marked with a "+" sign if the score is higher than the mean for the untargeted students in that school, a "-" sign if the targeted student scored lower than the untargeted students, and a "0" if they score the same. Since untargeted middle school students were not surveyed, we do not have this data for middle schools so for middle schools the average score in each school is shown simply by a dot.

## Differences between Models and Schools Use of Prizes for Improved Attendance

Figure 1 shows several things about the use of prizes to encourage attendance. First, there is a wide variation among

Figure 1. Awards for Improved Attendance of Target Students and Their Friends, by School and Models.

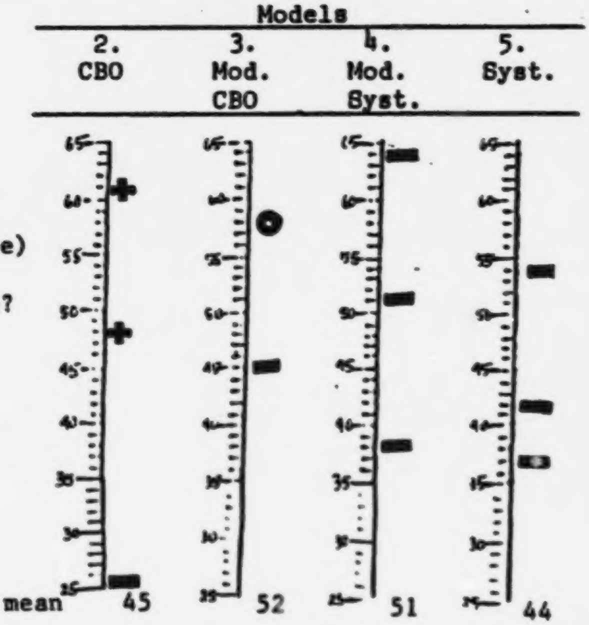
HIGH SCHOOL

Scores on Attendence Prize scale

Construction:
Mean of
1. Did you ever get a prize at this school for Improved Attendence? (True)
2. Did any of your friends ever get a Prize for improving their attendence?

Legend:
✚ Targeted students have higher scores than untargeted
— Targeted students have lower scores than untargeted
O Targeted and untargeted have same scores

Average Score of Targeted Students In Each High School



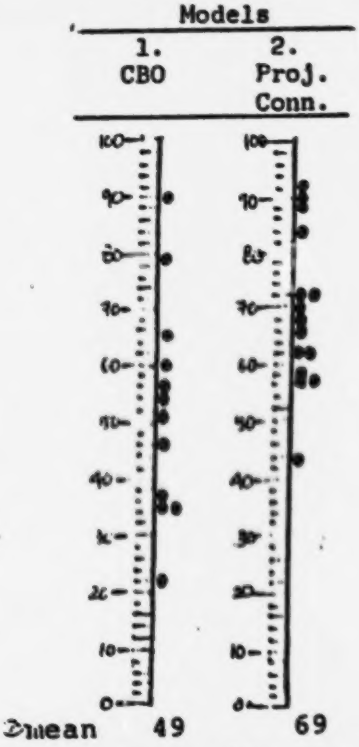
interquartile range = .5 s.d.

MIDDLE SCHOOL

Scores on Attendence Prize scale

Construction:
Same as High School Scale

Average Score of Targeted Students In Each Middle School



interquartile range = .5 s.d.

high schools in the amount of prizes awarded to targeted students, with 2 1/2 times as many students reporting receiving prizes (or knowing someone who did) in the highest-ranking school compared to the lowest ranking. The range among middle schools is almost as great. The interquartile ranges, both .5, is higher for the measure than for the other questions we will analyze. There does not seem to be much variation among high school models. The four schools with the highest scores on the prize scale come from all four models. There does seem to be a difference between the two middle-school models. The data suggest that the school-based Project Connect used prizes a good deal more than the schools which used CBOs to provide services.

In most high schools, the targeted students were less likely to receive, or know of, attendance prizes. At least, this is true for systemic schools. In only two of the eleven schools do targeted students receive more prizes than non-targeted students and in only one school did they receive as many prizes. All three of these schools are schools which have CBO-based programs. All of the systemic schools award fewer prizes to targeted students than to non-targeted students. There is a certain amount of tension in the schools because of a feeling on the part of some teachers that targeted students are receiving rewards for behavior which is not as good as that of the average student, who is not receiving any special awards. It may be that this concern is greater in high schools with CBO-based programs.

## Absenteeism Follow-Up

It seems that the Project Connect middle schools provided a greater amount of services for following up on absenteeism than did the CBO middle schools (data not shown). We constructed a scale based on the percentage of students who say that when students are absent for one day the school will call their homes, an adult at the school will ask the students where they were when they return to school, and the negative of the percentage of students saying that no one at the school pays attention to absences. On this scale, nine of the fifteen Project Connect schools have a higher response than any of the twelve schools with CBO programs for whom survey data are available. We don't know whether this reflects a slowness to implement programs in CBO schools or a difference in emphasis, with the CBO schools emphasising other services more than attendance programs. It is the case that CBO middle school programs were not put in place as quickly as Project Connect programs were.

## Counseling

The other program most often emphasized in all the schools is personal counseling (data not shown). This aspect of the program seems to have been well implemented in the high schools, where we find the hard to reach targeted students generally more likely to report having conversations with school staff about personal problems than do other students. This is complicated. One would assume, given the higher absenteeism rate of these students and the fact that they are on the whole less attractive to school staff, that they would have less contact with school people. At the same time, these students do get into more trouble which in and of itself places them in contact with the school staff. So perhaps it is not so surprising that these students report as much contact with school staff as do other students (and it may also be a tribute to the professionalism of school staffs). The targeted high school students are about as likely to say that teachers like them (46% versus 48% for non-targeted students). Thirty-three percent of the targeted students report that they "often" talk to someone at school about their future; 13% say they talk about personal matters and 16% say they talk about their health. These figures are all slightly higher than the corresponding figures for non-targeted students: 31%, 11% and 13% respectively. Middle school students report slightly higher responses, which seems reasonable given that middle schools are smaller and supposedly more personal than high schools. While some schools seem to provide more teacher-student contact than others, the differences are not great and there is no indication that there is one model of service delivery which is more or less effective than another.

One way to assess the quality of teacher-student contact is to look at the student responses on a scale which seems to measure the students reaction to their faculty in personal terms. The scale is built from the responses to three questions: whether the students think the teachers like them, whether they identify someone in the school that they feel they can talk to and whether they say the relationship between themselves and the school is like that between family or friends as opposed to between strangers or enemies. Although this last item does not mention school staff explicitly, the responses correlate with the other two items so we believe that the students answered this question in terms of their personal relations with school staff. All the scores are relatively high, reflecting the generally positive attitude of at least some of the adults in their school. Figure 2 shows the responses for students in each school and shows no clear pattern. In only three of the high schools do the targeted students show a more positive attitude toward their school and its faculty than do untargeted students. There seems to be a great deal of variation from one school to another, but no indication that one model is superior to any other. The middle school results are similiar--they show a great deal of variation from school to school within both Project Connect and the CBO model with neither model showing higher scores than the other.

A related scale is one based around two questions which ask whether the students feel that the school is concerned about them: they are asked if they agree with the statement "no one really cares what happens to me" and "the school doesn't care whether I come to school or not." Targeted high school students are not very likely to agree with the statement "no one really cares what happens to me" (16% say this compared to 15% of non-targeted students). Similiarly they do not agree with the statement "the school doesn't care whether I come to school or

## Figure 2. Positive Feelings About School Staff, by School and Model

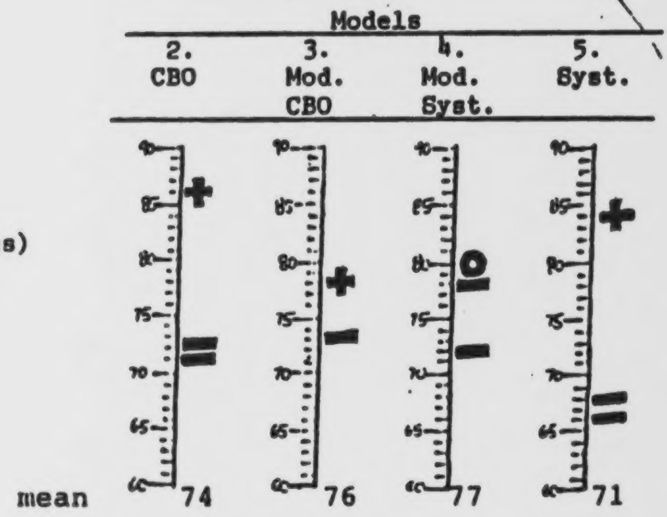
### HIGH SCHOOL

Scores on
"I Like the Staff" scale

Construction:
Mean of
1. School and I are like (family, friends, distant relatives, strangers, enemies)
2. My Teachers Like Me (true)
3. There Isn't Anyone (on school staff) I can Talk To (False)

Legend:
- + Targeted students have higher scores than untargeted
- − Targeted students have lower scores than untargeted
- O Targeted and untargeted have same scores

Average Score of Targeted Students
In Each High School



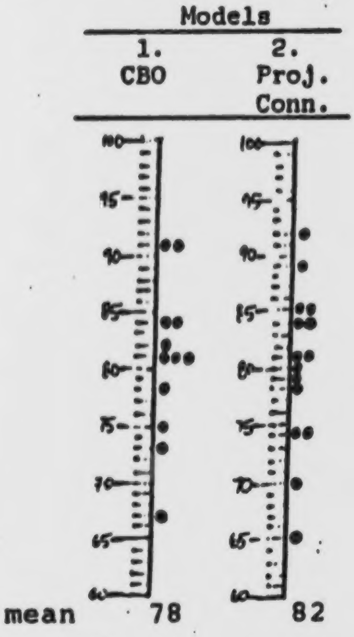
interquartile range = .3 s.d.

### MIDDLE SCHOOL

Scores on
"I Like the Staff" scale

Construction:
Same as High School Scale

Average Score of Targeted Students
In Each Middle School



interquartile range = .4 s.d.

not"; only 18% say this compared to 22% of non-targeted students. Again there is wide variation, with some schools having twice as many students complaining that the school is uninterested in them. We assume that both questions refer to the school and its faculty even though the first one does not explicitly mention school staff when it says that "no one really cares what happens to me."

Figure 3 shows the responses for each high school. The two high schools with the fewest students complaining that no one cares about them are both CBO schools, tempting us to think that the CBO-based program may be better in delivering a sense of personal contact. However, notice that in two of the five CBO schools the targeted students are more likely to complain about the school not caring about them than are non-targeted students in the same school, which makes us hesitate to draw any conclusion here. The middle schools do show a pattern, with the students being more likely to feel alienated in the schools which have CBO programs. It is of course hard to tell what if anything this means with the baseline survey since there are no prior measurement points for comparison, and we do not know very much about how student bodies differ in background characteristics. There is no evidence that students in the CBO programs have lower family education or come from more one-parent households, but these are not sufficient measures of possible background differences within the schools. Next year, when the CBO programs will presumably not be hampered by slow implementation, may show a different result.

One important finding is that the targeted high school students are considerably less likely to be involved in athletics or clubs in the school. Twenty-two percent of the targeted students say they are involved in a school club or team, compared to 27% of non-targeted students. Even the 27% is very low compared to students in other school systems in the United States. Only 36% of middle school students report being involved in a sport or club. This percentage is also quite low compared to other school systems elsewhere and a number of studies have shown that providing opportunities for extracurricular activities improves school morale, decreases disruptions and enhances student self-esteem. There are large differences in participation rates among the schools (Figure 4).

A minority of students receive tutoring services as part of the Dropout Prevention Program. Only 8% of targeted high school students receive tutoring services compared to 11% of non-targeted students. It appears that the systemic high school programs are compensating for this to some degree as Figure 5 indicates. As that figure shows, five of the six systemic schools seem to be providing tutoring services to more targeted students that any of the CBO based schools and in four cases these tutoring services are frequent enough to eliminate the disparity in amount of tutoring between targeted and untargeted students. The lower part of the figure shows tutoring services received by middle school students; tutoring is more common in

## Figure 3. Feeling School Doesn't Care About Me by School and Model

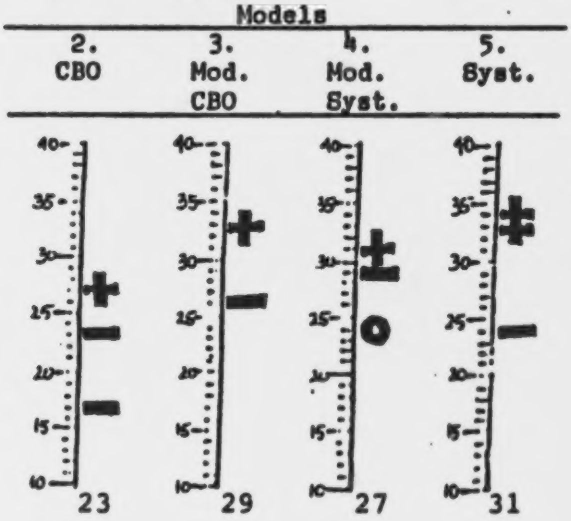
**HIGH SCHOOL**

Score on
"No one cares about me" scale

Construction:
Mean of
1.No one really cares much about
What happens to me. (Agree)
2.The School does not care
Whether I come to school or not.(agree)

Legend:
+ Targeted students have higher scores than untargeted
— Targeted students have lower scores than untargeted
O Targeted and untargeted have same scores

Average Score of Targeted Students In Each High School



mean

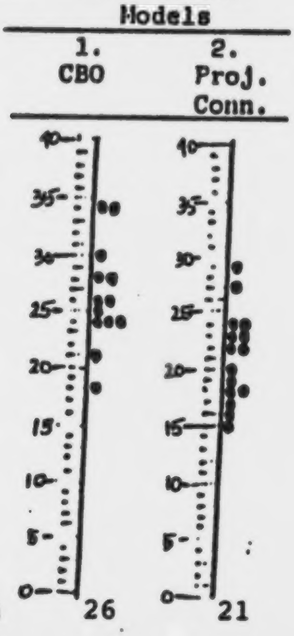
interquartile range = .3 s.d.

**MIDDLE SCHOOL**

Score on
"nobody cares about me" scale

Construction:
Same as High School Scale

Average Score of Targeted Students In Each Middle School



mean

interquartile range = .25 s.d.

Figure 4. Percentage of Students in Sport or Clubs, by School and Model.

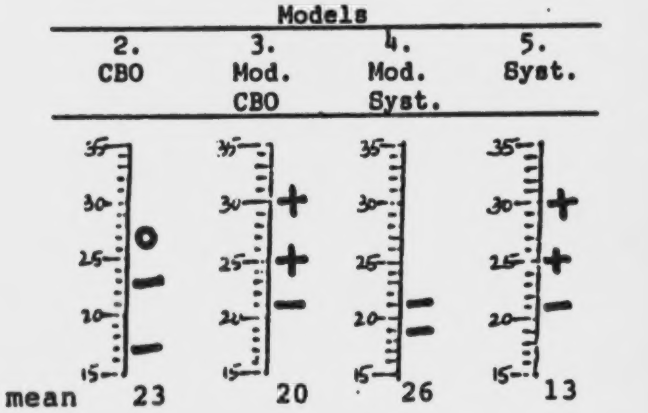
HIGH SCHOOL

Score on
Participation Scale

Percent yes to "Are You a Member of any School Clubs or Sports Teams?"

Legend:
- + Targeted students have higher scores than untargeted
- − Targeted students have lower scores than untargeted
- O Targeted and untargeted have same scores

Average Score of Targeted Students In Each High School



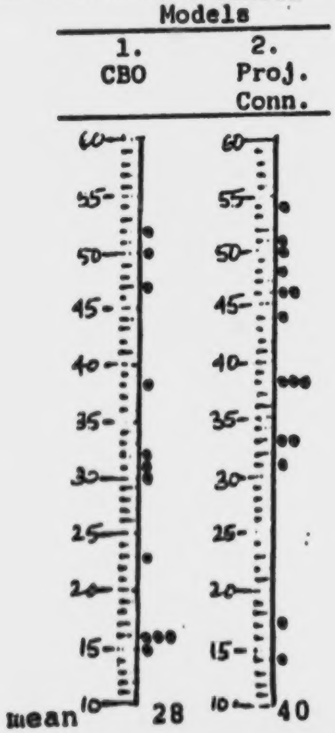
interquartile range = .20 s.d.

MIDDLE SCHOOL

Score on
Participation Scale

Construction:
Same as High School Scale

Average Score of Targeted Students In Each Middle School



interquartile range = .4 s.d.

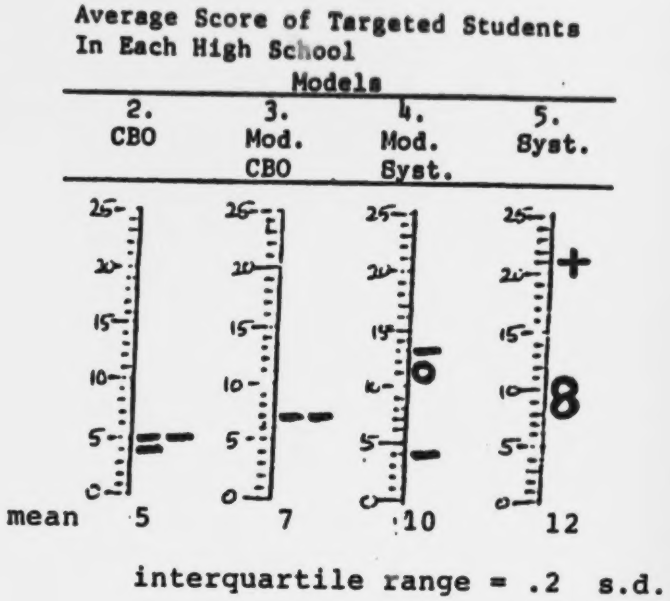
Figure 5. Percent in After School Tutoring Programs, by School and Model.

HIGH SCHOOL

After-School Tutoring Scale

Percent "yes" to
"Do you get help on
your homework from...
Tutors after school?" (yes)

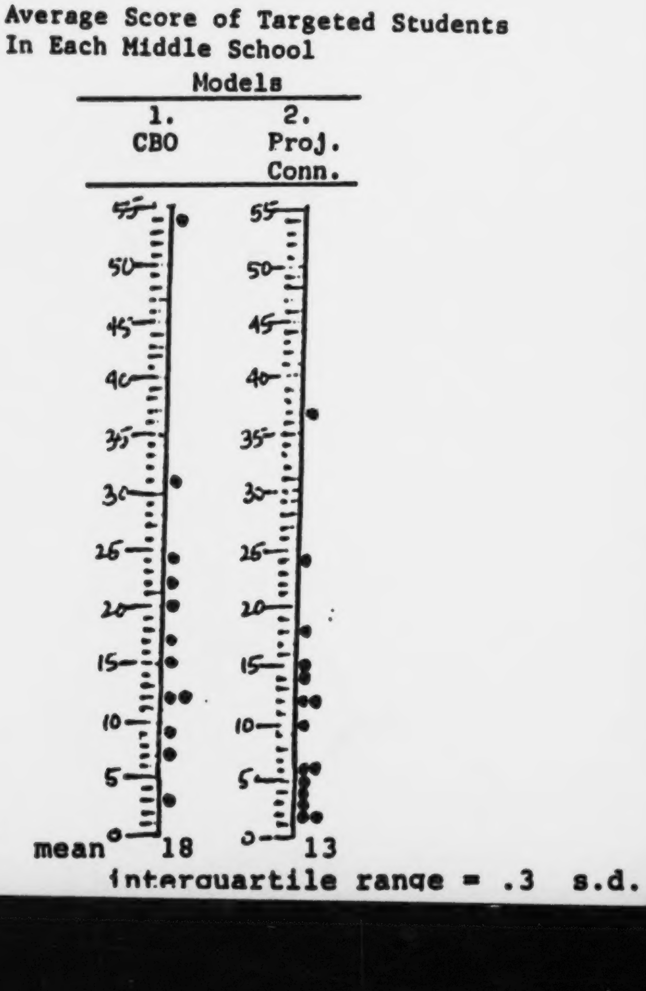
Legend:
- **+** Targeted students have higher scores than untargeted
- **−** Targeted students have lower scores than untargeted
- **O** Targeted and untargeted have same scores



MIDDLE SCHOOL

After-School Tutoring Scale

Question same as High school



middle school CBO programs.

One theory of dropout prevention is that high risk high school students should be given help in developing a career and developing job skills and work experience. The assumption is that students will be more likely to stay in high school if their high school education seems more relevant to their needs. We asked students a series of questions about their career and vocational experience at school. The targeted students were not more likely than other students to say that they were gaining skills that would be useful to them. They were also not more likely to have received a classroom-oriented career education. For example, 70% of the targeted students said that they had read about occupations but exactly the same percentage of non-targeted students said that. Where the difference appeared is in actual working experience, with 39% of the targeted students saying that the school is helping them get a job compared to only 28% of the non-targeted students. Targeted students also said they learned more about how to interview for a job (64% versus 57% of the non-targeted students), more about how to dress at work (54% versus 49%), and to a lesser extent what employers expect from workers (62% versus 59%). The programs operated by community organizations emphasize vocational and career preparation more strongly and this is reflected in the student survey. We constructed a scale by simply averaging the percentage of "yes" responses to the nine questions about vocational experience. (In addition to the six questions above, students were also asked whether they had listened to lectures from people working in different jobs, whether their parents had visited the school to discuss student job opportunities and whether they had gone to work places to observe different kinds of work being done.) As Figure 6 shows, the average percentage "yes" to these questions ranges from a high of 63% to a low of 37% with the high scores appearing most often in the schools with CBO-based programs. In the five schools with CBO based programs, targeted students reported more vocational experience than non-targeted students in each case, but this was true in only two of the six high schools with systemic programs.

The middle schools have a special problem, the need to help students make a smooth transition from the middle school into high school. This is a very difficult problem given the fact that the high schools are structured with a college-style open enrollment and competitive admission process. Among 8th and 9th grade students, 65% have heard high school students or teachers visit their school and talk to them about what the high school is like. Eighty-seven percent have gone with their class to visit the high school. These are the two most common forms of contact with the high school; beyond that, 30% of the students have attended a high school sports event, 23% have gone to the high school for an after school athletics progam and 23% have also gone for after school academic projects. Nineteen percent of the students have gone on a field trip with students from the high school and 17% have "sat in" on a high school class. These items were combined into a scale which is simply the percentage of all

Figure 6. Extent of Career Education of High School Students, by School and Model.

HIGH SCHOOL

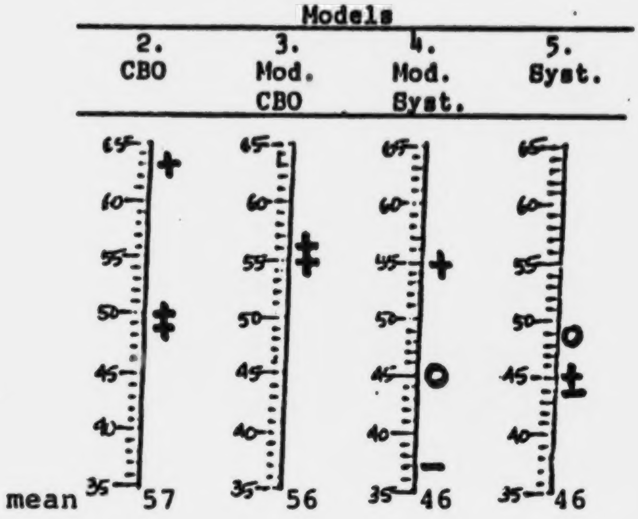
Career Education Scale

Construction:
Mean of (Have you...)
- Learned a vocational skill?
- Read About Different Careers?
- Listened to People Working in Different Careers?
- Gone to...watch people working?
- Learned How to Interview?
- Had your Parents visit School to Learn about Careers?
- Learned How to Dress for work?
- Learned How employers expect Workers to Act?

Did the School Ever Help You Get A Job?

Legend:
- + Targeted students have higher scores than untargeted
- — Targeted students have lower scores than untargeted
- O Targeted and untargeted have same scores

Average Score of Targeted Students In Each High School



interquartile range = .4 s.d.

these activities that the average student has done. Figure 7 shows that this number ranges considerably from one middle school to another, the interquartile range is approximately one-third of a standard deviation, suggesting that some schools offer more activities putting students in touch with the high school. However, there is no difference between those schools which have a CBO based dropout program and those schools using Project Connect.

It is far too early to expect the Dropout Program to have a major impact on the quality of school life or even on the amount of absenteeism. We are not surprised to find three basic measures--the amount of personal disruptive behavior, the amount of disruption the students saw in the school and the percentage of students who admit to voluntarily being absent--seem to show no difference between the different models of service delivery.

Students were asked several questions dealing with their conflict with other students and with staff. Figure 8 shows the average percentage of students reporting that they had: (1) been in a fight, (2) been suspended, or (3) stayed home because they were in trouble with a faculty member. The percentages vary considerably among schools (note the high interquartile range), suggesting that schools do have considerable impact on students' behavior (or that these schools vary greatly in the kinds of students they enroll). However, there is no pattern of differences among the models, in either the high schools or the middle schools.

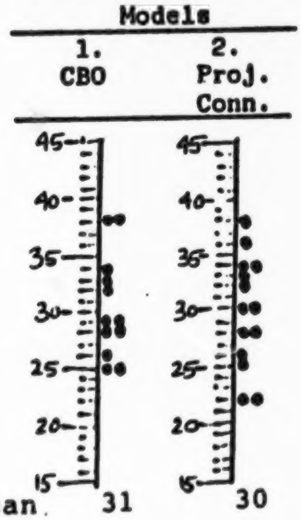
Figure 9 shows the pattern of responses to two questions dealing with school disruption--the average response to two questions asking whether it was often/sometimes/or almost never true that "the hall was so noisy that I couldn't concentrate on my studies" and that "the classroom was so noisy that the teacher could not teach." Thirty-one percent of the targeted high school students said their halls were that disruptive often and 23% said that their classrooms were often too disruptive for teaching. The score is from 0-1, where 1 means that both questions are answered often and the 0 means that both questions are answered almost never. The high school means range from .58, leaning more toward often than never, down to .41 which leans toward never more than often. In the highest school students answer often more than in the lowest school by a 3 to 2 ratio. There seems to be no pattern in the responses--models one and two each have a highly disruptive school and a school with relatively low levels of disruption, for example. The range among the middle schools in levels of disruption is quite great, the lowest school having a score of only .33 and the highest school a score of .66. In the highest school a majority of the students answer "often" to both questions, while in the school with the lowest levels of disruption a majority of the students answer almost never to both questions. Again, however, there is no difference between the models.

It needs to be pointed out that students who are less at

Figure 7. Amount of Contact With High School Among 8th and 9th Grade Middle School Students, by School and Model.

MIDDLE SCHOOL

**Average Score of Targeted Students In Each Middle School**



High School Contact Scale:

Average percentage who have
   toured high school;
   gone to high school games;
   gone to after-school sports programs;
   gone to after-school academic program;
   sat in on high school classes;
   gone on field trip with high school students;
   heard talk by students or teachers from the high school

interquartile range = .3 s.d.

**Legend:**
- **+ Targeted students have higher scores than untargeted**
- **− Targeted students have lower scores than untargeted**
- **O Targeted and untargeted have same scores**

Figure 8. Amount of Conflict With Other Students and School Staff, by School and Model.

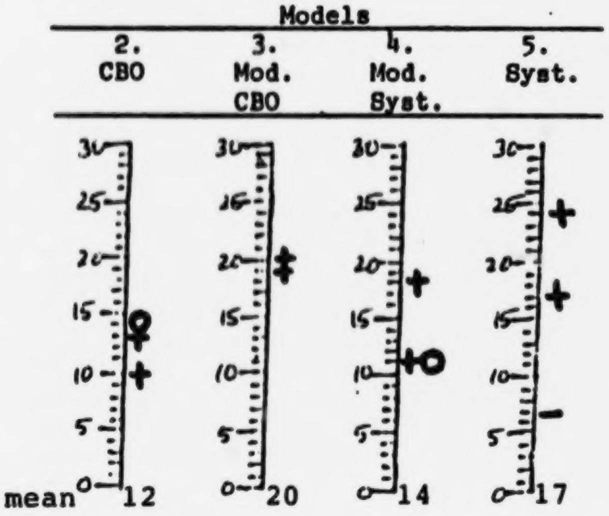
HIGH SCHOOL

Conflict Scale

Construction:
Mean of
- % in fight this term;
- % suspended;
- % stayed home because in trouble with school staff.

Legend:
- + Targeted students have higher scores than untargeted
- — Targeted students have lower scores than untargeted
- 0 Targeted and untargeted have same scores

Average Score of Targeted Students In Each High School



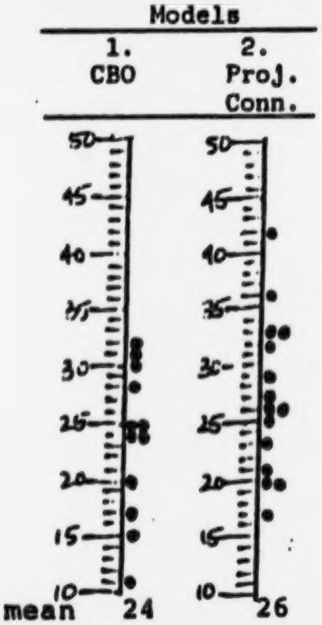
interquartile range = .4 s.d.

MIDDLE SCHOOL

Conflict Scale

Construction:
Same as High School Scale

Average Score of Targeted Students In Each Middle School



interquartile range = .4 s.d.

Figure 9. Amount of School Disruption perceived by Students, by School and Model.

HIGH SCHOOL

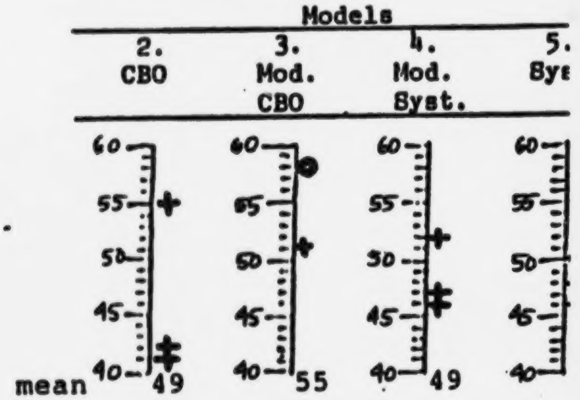
Disruption Scale

Construction:

Mean of "Often" responses to
"There is so much disruption in halls that I can't study."
"There is so much disruption in the ball the teacher can't teach."

Legend:
- + Targeted students have higher scores than untargeted
- − Targeted students have lower scores than untargeted
- O Targeted and untargeted have same scores

Average Score of Targeted Students In Each High School



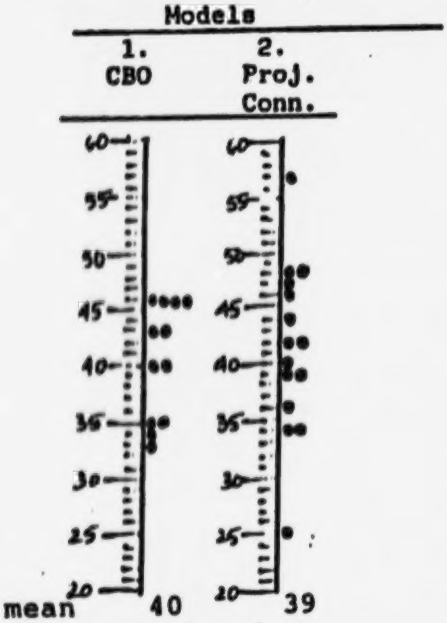
interquartile range = .3

MIDDLE SCHOOL

Disruption Scale

Construction:
Same as High school scale

Average Score of Targeted Students In Each Middle School



interquartile range= .5 s. d

risk in school may not differ from at-risk students in their assessment that a given school is safe or unsafe, a good place to learn or a place where it is difficult to get a good education. Differences between schools or models, therefore, may be important for certain estimates of climate even when there are not differences between categories of students.

Students were asked why they had been absent during the spring term and a scale was constructed from two answers which indicate a purely voluntary absenteeism, saying they wished to go somewhere with friends and saying that they stayed home from school simply because they "didn't feel like going." We also added two other responses--the percentage of students who said they stayed home because they did not have their homework done, which tended to be correlated with the other two answers, and also answering yes to the statement "most of the time I do not feel like going to school." These four answers are pooled in the voluntary absenteeism scale and as Figure 10 shows there are very high differences between the schools. One school has nearly three times more responses of this type than does another among the targeted population of high school students. However, there seems to be no interpretable differences among the models, since schools with very high self-reported voluntary absenteeism are in the same model grouping with other schools with very low rates. The middle school data shows a similar pattern with very wide differences among schools but no tendency for either Project Connect schools or schools with the CBO programs to have more or fewer voluntary absenteeism reports.

In conclusion, these data seem to suggest that we have a viable first year survey with which to assess the impact of the Dropout Program in future years. However, the differences between the schools are largely unexplainable, probably related to aspects of school culture and to the characteristics of the student body in ways which we simply do not understand yet. Consequently, it seems premature to draw any conclusions about the effectiveness of the different models. The data do indicate that certain types of programs are often implemented by certain types of models, which mainly suggest that the students are reporting with some accuracy the services they have received.

Figure 10. Self-reported Voluntary Absences, by School and Model.

**HIGH SCHOOL**

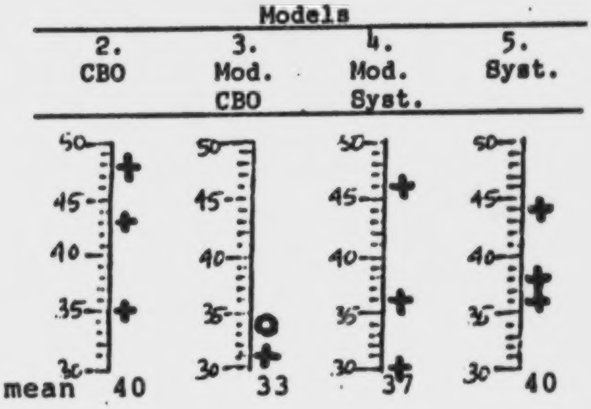
Voluntary Absence Scale

Construction:
  Mean of
  Did you ever miss school
  because you...
    wanted to do womething with
      your friends?
    did not have your homework done?
    just did not feel like going?

  Do you feel (that)
   "Most of the time I do not want
      to come to school" (yes)
  How ofter does your best friend...
    "cut classes?" (often)

Legend:
- ✚ Targeted students have higher scores than untargeted
- — Targeted students have lower scores than untargeted
- O Targeted and untargeted have same scores

Average Score of Targeted Students
In Each High School



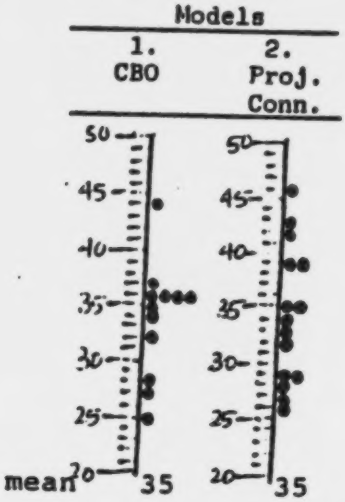
interquartile range = .4 s.d.

**MIDDLE SCHOOL**

Voluntary Absence Scale

Construction:
  Same as High School Scale

Average Score of Targeted Students
In Each Middle School



interquartile range = .4 s.d.

# CHAPTER SIX
# PROGRAM COSTS FOR THE DROPOUT PREVENTION INITIATIVE

The purpose of this section is to provide a preliminary summary of the overall first-year costs of dropout prevention services in the 13 high schools and 29 middle schools being evaluated. In subsequent years, program costs will be matched with program outcomes to assess cost effectiveness. Data on allocations and expenditures for the first year were provided in aggregate form by the Board of Education. The accounting system used by the Board does not differentiate among budget categories in ways that allow for a complete analysis; the problems this created and the assumptions that were made in analyzing the data are discussed later in this section. In future years, the evaluators will not be so dependent on the Board's accounting procedures and many of these problems will be resolved.

The Dropout Prevention Program in these 42 schools receives discrete funding from local tax levy, state, and city sources. Although a small portion of the program is funded through regular school budgets and some important program resources are provided through private contributions, the first-year cost analysis focuses exclusively on that portion of program costs which are covered by special funding.

## Start-up Costs and Budget Allocations

Although the Dropout Prevention Program's first year of operation was the 1985-86 school year, planning activities for the ten laboratory high schools began during the spring of 1985. After being selected for program participation, each high school was given 1.5 units of funding, with a total dollar equivalent of $228,750. The uses to which this money was put varied. All schools immediately appointed DPP coordinators with responsibility for program development, and nine schools used some funds to pay the coordinator or provide per session funds for staff development. In some schools, a small program was begun for students, primarily involving work experience; six schools used OTPS money for start-up supplies and equipment and for student aide pay and attendance incentives. Several schools also hired neighborhood workers. This initial allocation was small relative to the 1985-86 funding, but it helped to facilitate the development of a full scale program for the following September.

Approximately $7,672,959 was allocated to the 13 high schools for their dropout prevention programs in 1985-86. The ten DPP high schools were given $150,000 each for "program constants" (described below); the three AIDP schools received a much smaller amount of school-based funding. As in the middle schools, the balance of the funding was derived from a formula allocating approximately $1000 per targeted student. The thirteen high schools are divided into four program models. In the systemic and modified systemic models (total of 6 schools), most of the funding went directly to the school. Each of these schools, however, contracted with at least one CBO for some services. The seven schools in the modified and pure CBO models all contracted with a single CBO to deliver program services. Thus, out of the basic high school allocation, the schools received $4,010,707, and the twelve CBOs involved received a total of $3,579,790 (see Figures C-1 and C-2).

Budget modifications for the DPP high schools were made at several points during the year. Some schools received additional monies for salaries or OTPS, based on accruals within budget categories. In addition, during the spring term, the schools in the modified CBO model were given funding for teachers and guidance counselors for a centralized GED program and for transitional academic classes for long term absentee students returning to school. These modifications are not included in our accounting of budget allocations; thus, as will be discussed later, in some cases we show program costs as having exceeded allocations.

In 1985-86, the middle school program received a total allocation of $4,400,000. This represented $150,000 per school, with one large school receiving an additional $50,000. Monies were channeled through the community school districts, which were responsible for developing and managing the schools' budgets. In five of the ten districts (representing 14 middle schools), community based organizations were contracted to provide the bulk of dropout prevention services. In these cases, the schools themselves received $50,000 in funding for the program, primarily to support facilitation and attendance outreach services, and each of the five CBOs received $100,000 per school (see Figure C-3).

## Program Constants

In planning the Dropout Prevention Program at the high school level, it was decided that each school should receive a significant amount of funding in order to enhance the entire school environment as well as contribute specifically to dropout prevention, regardless of which program model a school adopted. The $150,000 per school allocated for this purpose was applied to five program constants: 1)funding for the DPP Coordinator; 2)funding for ten persons to attend a three-week DPP Summer Institute; 3)discretionary funding for improved school security, which could purchase personnel, equipment, or contracted services; 4)funding for hardware and staff time to implement an automated attendance entry system; and 5)an OTPS discretionary fund, to purchase supplies, attendance incentives, telephones, and other equipment. In the schools in the systemic and modified systemic models, this base funding was added to other resources given directly to the schools. However, in the modified systemic schools, these program constants were essentially the only funds over which schools themselves had control and did allow for some broader program impact.

The three AIDP high schools in the pure CBO model did not receive these program constants. These schools were given funds for a family paraprofessional and staff development, and some OTPS and student aide money. The schools themselves provided the funding for program facilitators and guidance counselors.

### Community Based Organization Funding

Fifteen CBOs participated in the Dropout Prevention Program -- five at the middle school level and twelve at the high school level (two CBOs had programs at both levels). Funding ranged from $5000 for a small alternative educational program to $2,446,000 for a multi-service program in seven school sites. As has been mentioned elsewhere in this report, the most significant budgetary issue for the CBOs during the start-up year was the lateness of contract signing and the consequent delays in hiring staff and beginning services.

### Data Issues and Assumptions

Tables 1 through 3 present the allocations, expenditures, encumbrances, and balances for the dropout prevention programs in the high schools and middle schools. These data were provided by the Board of Education, and are broken down by the Board's four budget categories: 1) Pedagogic personnel include teachers, guidance counselors, administrative personnel and supervisors. 2) Non-pedagogic personnel include para-professionals, aides and neighborhood workers (family workers, family assistants, etc.). In some cases, schools employed some of the student program participants, for example to help improve security, and these expenditures are included in the non-pedagogic category. 3) Equipment, books, supplies and communications are included in the Other-Than-Personnel-Services category (OTPS). 4) The cost of services provided by the Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) are recorded separately. Since the CBOs have different accounting systems and different names for categories of employees, no consistent disaggregation of CBO expenditures was possible with the available data.

Allocations: Allocations for the DPP high schools were taken from initial budgets for each of the ten schools provided to us by the high school DPP office. These figures did not include fringe benefits for the Board of Education personnel. Nor do they include variances approved during the year. Budgets for the three AIDP high schools were provided by the Board's Office of High School Support Services. Once again, these were initial allocations, but in this case, most of the pedagogic personnel costs were budgeted in personnel units that were paid for out of the individual school budgets rather than by AIDP; thus they are not included in our figures. Those personnel allocations that were reported to us and that were paid for by AIDP funds did

## Table C-1

## Allocations and Expenditures

## New York City Department of Education Dropout Prevention Program

## **DPP High Schools--Summary**

## School Year 1985-1986

| Model | Budget Category | Allocation | Expenditures + Encumbrances | Balance | Expenditure Ratio |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Pure Systemic** | | | | | |
| | Pedagogic | 785,061 | 742,991 | 42,070 | 0.054 |
| | Non-Ped. | 382,842 | 382,576 | 266 | 0.001 |
| | OTPS | 132,260 | 100,341 | 31,919 | 0.241 |
| | CBO | 442,600 | 445,000 | (2,400) | (0.005) |
| | Total | 1,742,763 | 1,670,908 | 71,855 | 0.041 |
| **Modified Systemic** | | | | | |
| | Pedagogic | 1,246,541 | 1,146,798 | 99,743 | 0.080 |
| | Non-Ped. | 280,366 | 245,546 | 34,820 | 0.124 |
| | OTPS | 194,302 | 243,932 | (49,630) | (0.255) |
| | CBO | 651,215 | 620,945 | 30,270 | 0.047 |
| | Total | 2,372,424 | 2,257,221 | 115,203 | 0.049 |
| **Modified CBO** | | | | | |
| | Pedagogic | 251,392 | 357,070 | (105,678) | (0.420) |
| | Non-Ped. | 90,953 | 63,229 | 27,724 | 0.305 |
| | OTPS | 44,990 | 52,392 | (7,402) | (0.165) |
| | CBO | 1,202,975 | 1,170,717 | 32,258 | 0.027 |
| | Total | 1,590,310 | 1,643,408 | (53,098) | (0.033) |
| **Grand Total** | | **5,705,497** | **5,571,537** | **133,960** | **0.024** |

## Table C-2
Allocations and Expenditures
New York City Department of Education Dropout Prevention Program
**AIDP High Schools--Summary**
School Year 1985-1986

| Model | Budget Category | Allocation | Expenditures + Encumbrances | Balance | Expenditure Ratio |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Pure CBO--AIDP** | | | | | |
| | Pedagogic | 26,906[1] | 26,906[2] | 0 | 0.000 |
| | Non-Ped. | 51,356 | 51,356 | 0 | 0.000 |
| | OTPS | 4,200 | 4,200 | 0 | 0.000 |
| | CBO | 1,283,000 | 1,266,361 | 16,639 | 0.013 |
| | Total | 1,365,462 | 1,348,823 | 16,639 | 0.012 |

---

[1] Expenditures in this program for pedagogic personnel include 3.6 personnel units for guidance counselors and 1.2 units for facilitators that come out of the individual school budgets and not the AIDP funds. These expenditures are not reflected in this table.

[2] Expenditure data were not provided, although the program staff state that the funds were spent as planned. See the discussion in the text.

## Table C-3
## Distribution of Allocations and Expenditures
## New York City Department of Education Dropout Prevention Program
## DPP High Schools--Summary
## School Year 1985-1986

| Model | Budget Category | Allocation | Expenditures and Encumbrances |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Pure Systemic** | | | |
| | Pedagogic | 45.0% | 44.5 |
| | Non-Ped. | 22.0 | 22.9 |
| | OTPS | 7.6 | 6.0 |
| | CBO | 25.4 | 26.6 |
| | Total | 100 | 100 |
| **Modified CBO** | | | |
| | Pedagogic | 15.8% | 21.7 |
| | Non-Ped. | 5.7 | 3.8 |
| | OTPS | 2.8 | 3.2 |
| | CBO | 75.7 | 71.3 |
| | Total | 100 | 100 |
| **Modified Systemic** | | | |
| | Pedagogic | 52.5% | 50.8 |
| | Non-Ped. | 11.8 | 10.9 |
| | OTPS | 8.2 | 10.8 |
| | CBO | 27.4 | 27.5 |
| | Total | 100 | 100 |

Figure C-1

## 1985–86 ALLOCATIONS BY MODEL

HIGH SCHOOLS

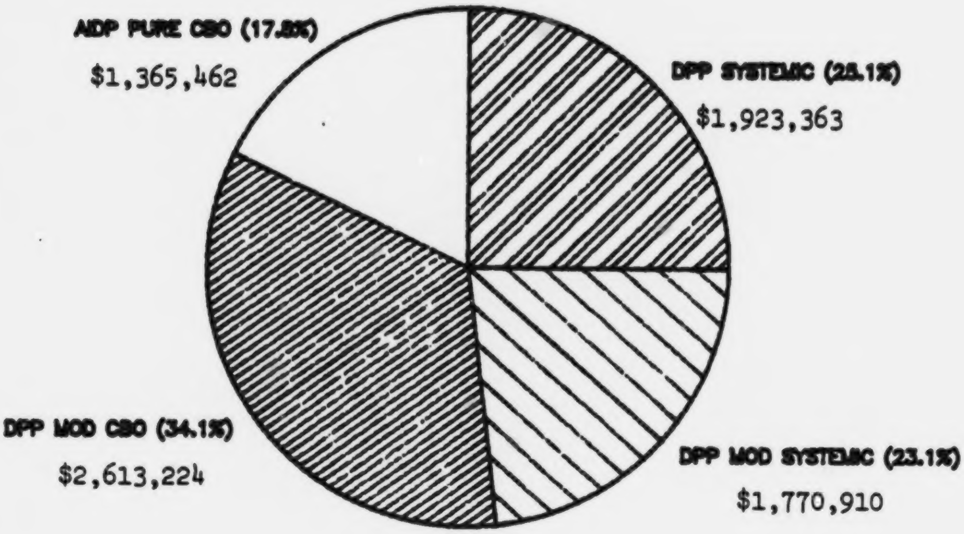


Figure C-2

## 1985–86 DPI ALLOCATIONS

### HIGH SCHOOLS

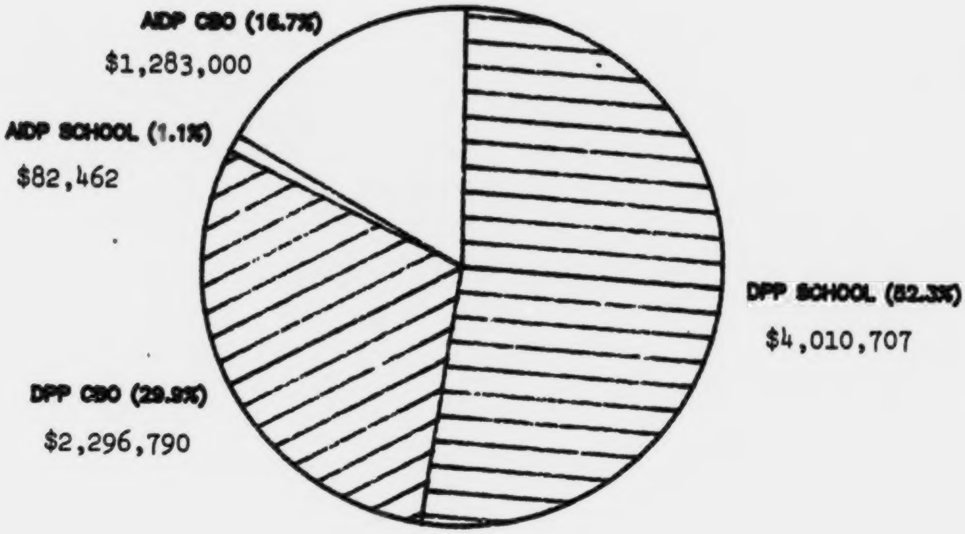
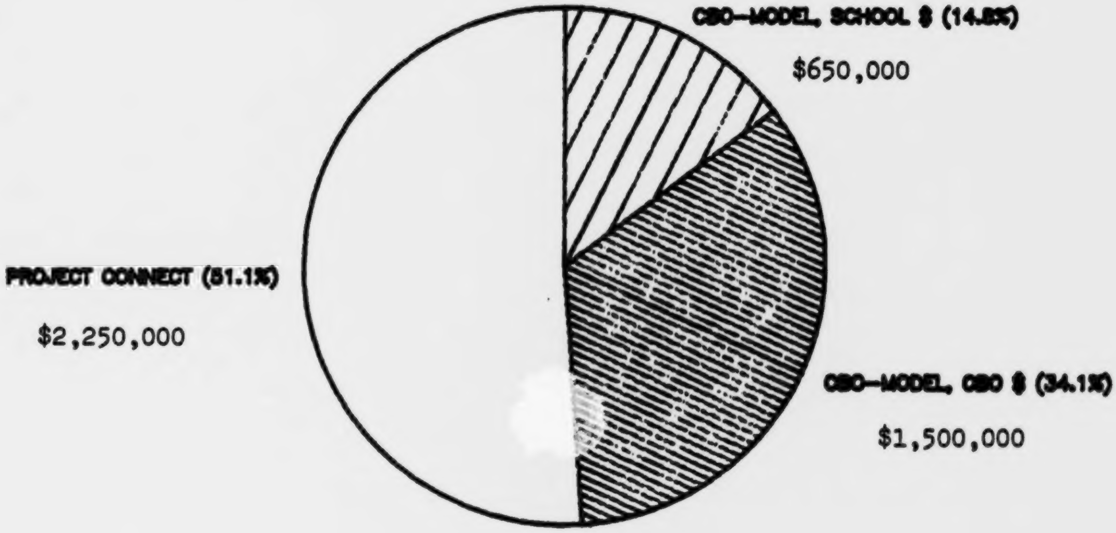


Figure C-3

**1985–86 ALLOCATIONS BY MODEL**

**MIDDLE SCHOOLS**



include fringe benefits. The Office of Budget Operations and Review provided us with allocations for the middle schools. The Office could not provide data for each participating school, rather, they were able to calculate the aggregate totals for each of the ten Community School Districts (CSD). In the future, these data will be disaggregated, but even with the data as they are, we were able to compare costs for the two different middle school models since models are not mixed within districts. Fringe benefits were included for the middle schools, although we used an estimate to allocate the fringes between pedagogic and non-pedagogic personnel.[1] Here, the reported allocations did reflect variances approved throughout the year. In fact, total budget for each district ($150,000 per school) did not change, although there might have been changes in the distribution of expenditures within the districts.

Expenditures: We encountered several problems in collecting data on actual expenditures. First, the Board does not as a matter of course calculate expenditures by school for the DPP program. It was necessary for us to disaggregate the data in order to compare program models. To remedy this in part, expenditure data reported here were compiled specially by the staff of the Dropout Prevention Program. Personnel expenditures were particularly difficult to ascertain; teachers' names from a master DPP list had to be matched to their schools and then their salaries were added up to calculate a sum for each school. Moreover, as with the allocation data, the figures we use in this report do not include fringe benefit expenditures for the DPP high schools.

Some of the expenditure data provided to us at the time of this report are not complete. Reported non-pedagogic expenditures for the high schools include expenditures through the middle of June and for pedagogic personnel through the middle of July. Since the latter is after the end of the fiscal year, this problem is not serious, although complete data would likely show some small changes. High school OTPS data are also through the middle of July and in this case, more expenditures will come in as vendors submit vouchers.

Expenditure data for the three AIDP high schools are estimates based on reports from AIDP program administrators about which allocations had been spent. We were able to acquire data on the actual expenditures by the CBOs working with these schools. As stated above, the schools themselves provided 1.6 personnel units (1.2 for a guidance counselor and .4 for a facilitator), which are not figured in to either allocations or expenditures. (According to staff at the Office of High School Support Services, all three schools did in fact use these units for the program.)

The process of determining expenditures for the middle schools was easier, although, as we pointed out earlier, middle school data were not available by school. The Board's Office of Budget Operations and Review was able to provide expenditure data for the program by Community School Board through the middle of September. Data on fringe benefits for the middle schools were provided, and for both budgets and expenditures, we estimated the distribution of the fringe benefit costs between pedagogic and non-pedagogic personnel.[2]

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[1] See footnote 2 below for an explanation of the estimate.

The Office of Funded Programs and Accounts Payable provided expenditures for the CBOs though the end of September. In this case, we examined the individual vouchers submitted by the CBOs and the records of payments by the Board.

Encumbrances: Encumbrances only apply to OTPS and CBO expenditures. Here encumbrances do not correspond to budget allocations. For OTPS expenditures, funds are encumbered when a purchase order is submitted, and for the CBOs when a contract is signed. No information on encumbrances for OTPS was provided for either the DPP or AIDP high schools. Middle school OTPS encumbrances were provided through the middle of September. Encumbrances for the CBOs working with the high schools were calculated by subtracting the payments by the Board to the CBOs as of the end of September from the amounts of the initial contracts. In some cases, the CBOs had not submitted vouchers for services performed in June--before the end of the fiscal year. Although technically, some funds for the CBOs working with the middle schools are still encumbered, information we gathered in our field work and from Board staff working with the middle schools and CBOs suggest that funds budgeted to these CBOs and not reported as spent by the end of September will not be charged to the program. Therefore, we have assumed that there are no more encumbered funds for the middle school CBOs. Therefore, the only encumbrances included in the following analysis are for middle school OTPS expenditures and high school (both DPP and AIDP) CBO expenditures. In any case, except under exceptional circumstances, funds encumbered for the previous fiscal year revert to the Board if they are not spent by October 31.

Balances: The balances are the difference between the initial allocation and the sum of expenditures and encumbrances. Since for the DPP high schools, the allocations do not include mid-year variances, the balances for these schools include approved budget changes as well as unplanned over- or under-spending. Since no expenditure data were provided for the AIDP high schools, balances are not reported.

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2. For the budgets, fringes were allocated according to the proportion of the total direct salary costs accounted for by each of the two personnel categories. To estimate the expenditures on fringes we calculated the percentage of the direct salary allocation that was spent and we applied the same percentage to the budgeted fringes.

Program Constants: In the future, distinctions will be made for expenditures on the five program constants in the DPP high schools, but at this stage, these expenditures are incorporated into the four budget categories. For example, the program coordinator and the summer institute are counted among the pedagogic personnel and the expenditures on security are allocated among the two personnel categories, OTPS or CBOs depending on how the schools chose to use their security money. Exact expenditures on the summer institute were not provided, but we used an estimate, agreed upon with the central DPP administrators, of $10,000 per school based on the recorded costs for two of the high schools. The allocations for the automated attendance systems ($60,200 per school) were removed from both the budget and expenditure data, since installation was delayed in the first year. Nevertheless, these systems are being installed and we expect that the funds will be spent during the 1986-87 school year. But it should be kept in mind that the actual allocation for the ten DPP high schools was $620,000 higher than reported in Table 1.

Additional Problems: This report does not address several cost categories that need to be taken into account for a full cost effectiveness study. No attempt has been made to estimate the cost of central board personnel working on the program, to make distinctions between recurrent and non-recurrent costs, or to take account of the implicit or opportunity costs of the space used by the program activities. Finally, it is possible that the schools may devote personnel or resources to the program that are not included in the budget. Indeed, in many cases, especially in the systemic-model schools, it is difficult to separate program from non-program activities. No attempt is made here to evaluate the extent of this type of resource mixing. All of these issues will be taken up in more detail in the later years of this project.

## High School Program Costs

Table C-1 presents summary data for allocations, expenditures, and balances for the three DPP high School models--pure systemic, modified systemic, and modified CBO.[3] Table C-2 presents summary data for the three high schools using the pure CBO or AIDP model.

Overall, the high school DPP program had a small balance that was less than 3 percent of the total allocation. This balance would probably be smaller if complete data on personnel were included (non-pedagogic expenditures included entries only through the middle of June). On the other hand, some encumbrances may not be spent, thereby increasing the balance.

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[3] The allocations reported here include $1.168 million for the CBO component of Operation Success that was funded by AIDP rather than through the DPP.

Looking at the individual categories of expenditure, the OTPS expenditures were farthest from the allocations, but this did not have a large effect on the overall balance since the OTPS expenditures account for less than 7 percent of the total allocations. The modified systemic schools as a group had the largest balance. For these schools, expenditures on the pedagogic personnel in particular fell short of the allocation by almost $100,000. Nevertheless, the schools in this group still spent within 6 percent of their allocation. The largest single discrepancy was for the pedagogic personnel in the modified CBO schools. In this case, the schools spent over 40 percent more than the allocation, primarily as a result of a budget modification that gave these schools additional funds for teachers and guidance counselors. At the same time, these schools overestimated their para-professional (non-pedagogic) personnel expenditures by almost one third.[4]

The data on the AIDP schools presented in Table C-2 show that nearly all of the funds for this program model were spent. AIDP staff also state that the Board's direct share of the budgets for personnel and OTPS was spent as expected.

Table C-3 presents the percentage distribution of the allocations and expenditures across the four budget categories for the three high school DPP models. The most interesting insight to emerge here involves a comparison of the pure systemic and modified systemic models. Actually, the pure systemic schools relied almost as much on CBOs as the other group. But a difference in the relative expenditures on pedagogic versus non-pedagogic workers does emerge. The modified systemic schools budgeted and spent more money on teachers and guidance counselors, while the systemic schools relied more on para-professionals and neighborhood workers.

The distributions for the pure CBO (AIDP) model in Table C-4 not surprisingly show that the large majority of the funds were allocated to the CBO. On the other hand, it should be emphasized that for the three schools involved, almost five personnel units for facilitators and guidance counselors were paid for by the schools themselves. If these costs are included, then the pedagogic personnel share rises to about 11 percent and the CBO share falls to 85 percent.

Costs for Program Services. Through an analysis of budget documents and interviews with program personnel, it has been possible to estimate the allocations of high school dropout

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[4] There will always be some discrepancy between dollar allocations for Board of Education personnel and actual expenditures since allocations are made in personnel units. The expenditures for these units will vary depending on the seniority of the individual assigned to the post. Thus over-expenditures would result if there were a tendency for the schools to assign more senior personnel to the program.

## Table C-4

Distribution of Allocations and Expenditures
New York City Department of Education Dropout Prevention Program
**AIDP High Schools--Summary**
School Year 1985-1986

| Model | Budget Category | Allocation | Expenditures and Encumbrances |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Pure CBO--AIDP** | | | |
| | Pedagogic | 2.0%[a] | 2.0 |
| | Non-Ped. | 3.8 | 3.8 |
| | OTPS | 0.3 | 0.3 |
| | CBO | 94.0 | 93.9 |
| | Total | 100.0 | 100.0 |

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[a] This does not include the 4.8 units for pedagogic personnel paid for out of the individual school, not the AIDP, budgets. If these costs are included, then the pedagogic costs rise to about 11 percent of the total and the CBO expenditures fall to about 85 percent.

prevention program expenditures among the various components of services that comprise the DPP and AIDP programs. Table C-5 summarizes these expenditures across the 13 high schools, and by program model.

Overall, alternative education programs and services received the greatest dollar allocations, totalling approximately $2,730,445. At the school level, this program component was the highest-funded component in eleven of the thirteen schools. Guidance and counseling services were funded at a level of approximately $1,993,556. The expenditures for security are $602,000 lower than expected, because they do not include the costs of the automated attendance/entry system. Nevertheless, schools chose to spend funds over and above the "program constant" allotment for security -- $351,152 for the 10 DPP high schools. This category includes personnel costs for school deans and security officers, as well as costs for walkie-talkies and other hardware, and the costs of conflict mediation services provided through CBO contracts.

Health services and school level linkages were the least funded components of the dropout prevention programs. The former received no special funding except in two schools, and costs for the latter included relatively small allotments for supplies such as student information publications, or activities such as video productions that were shared between high schools and middle schools.

## Middle School Program Costs

Table C-6 presents the summary data for the two middle school models--Project Connect and the CBO model. The balances are higher for the middle schools than for the high schools. In this case, expenditures fell short of allocations by about 20 percent.[5] Balances are distributed more or less evenly across the expenditure categories except for pedagogic personnel. In fact, in the CBO-model districts, this allocation was overspent by 13 percent, while in the Project Connect districts, the pedagogic expenditures were much closer to the allocations than in the other categories.

As of the end of September, the districts using the CBO model had still not spent about 30 percent of their CBO funds. As we noted earlier, while technically these funds are still encumbered, it appears unlikely that this money will be spent for services provided during the 1985-1986 school year. This is primarily the result of the late start-up for the CBOs involved.

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5. The middle school and high school data are only roughly comparable. The middle school expenditure data are more recent -- September as opposed to July and June. And the middle school data include fringe benefits while fringes are not included in either the allocations or expenditures for the middle schools.

## TABLE C-5
## 1985-85 EXPENDITURES BY MODEL AND SERVICE COMPONENT

| MODEL | FACILITATION | ATTENDANCE | GUIDANCE | LINKAGES | HEALTH | ALT ED PROGS | SECURITY | STAFF DEV | OTHER | TOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| SYSTEMIC | $99,002 | $238,600 | $454,501 | $0 | $0 | $644,269 | $143,109 | $35,920 | $48,506 | $1,663,907 |
| MOD SYST | $128,151 | $257,615 | $639,747 | $20,707 | $8,293 | $951,507 | $103,435 | $89,400 | $46,306 | $2,245,161 |
| MOD CBO | $116,000 | $414,626 | $432,050 | $20,000 | $0 | $495,025 | $104,608 | $65,000 | $15,160 | $1,662,469 |
| DPP SUBTOTAL | $343,153 | $910,841 | $1,526,298 | $40,707 | $8,293 | $2,090,801 | $351,152 | $190,320 | $109,972 | $5,571,537 |
| (Allocation for Automated Attendance) | | | | | | | $602,000 | | | $602,000 |
| DPP TOTAL | $343,153 | $910,841 | $1,526,298 | $40,707 | $8,293 | $2,090,801 | $953,152 | $190,320 | $109,972 | $6,173,537 |
| PURE CBO | $0 | $239,889 | $467,258 | $0 | $0 | $639,644 | $0 | $2,032 | $0 | $1,348,823 |
| 85-86 TOTAL | $343,153 | $1,150,730 | $1,993,556 | $40,707 | $8,293 | $2,730,445 | $953,152 | $192,352 | $109,972 | $7,522,360 |

# Table C-6
## Allocations and Expenditures
## New York City Department of Education Dropout Prevention Program
## Middle Schools--Community School Districts
## School Year--1985-1986

| Model | Budget Category | Allocation | Expenditures + Encumbrances | Balance | Expenditure Ratio |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **CBO** | | | | | |
| | Pedagogic | 376,416 | 425,662 | (49,246) | (0.131) |
| | Non-Ped. | 167,805 | 105,337 | 62,468 | 0.372 |
| | OTPS | 105,779 | 81,783 | 23,996 | 0.227 |
| | CBO | 1,500,000 | 1,082,287 | 417,713 | 0.279 |
| | Total | 2,150,200 | 1,695,169 | 455,031 | 0.212 |
| **Project Connect** | | | | | |
| | Pedagogic | 1,089,765 | 974,621 | 115,144 | 0.106 |
| | Non-Ped. | 598,942 | 446,730 | 152,212 | 0.254 |
| | OTPS | 561,293 | 377,447 | 183,846 | 0.328 |
| | CBO | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.0 |
| | Total | 2,250,000 | 1,798,798 | 451,202 | 0.201 |
| **Grand Total** | | 5,765,962 | 4,843,090 | 922,872 | 0.160 |

It was difficult for the CBOs to spend the funds allocated to them in the available time. The Board of Education allowed these agencies to run summer programs in 1986 using funds from the fiscal year ending in June 1986. Nevertheless, this will not make up for the problems resulting from the late start.

Table C-7 presents the distribution of expenditures across the budget categories for the two models. The main conclusion that emerges from this table is that schools using both models ended up spending relatively more on pedagogic personnel than they initially planned. This was particularly true for the CBO-model districts. Correspondingly, much less was spent on paraprofessionals and neighborhood workers. Also, the Project Connect schools initially placed a much heavier emphasis on OTPS than either the high school models or the CBO model. In the high school models, the OTPS allocations were less than one fifth of the allocations for pedagogic personnel (this proportion would be even smaller if the fringes were included in the high school data). In the Project Connect districts, the OTPS budgets allocation was one half of the planned expenditure for teaching, supervisory and counseling personnel. A comparison of expenditures is less extreme, but qualitatively similar.

## Conclusion

The budget and expenditure data show that overall, the expenditures for the high school component of the Board of Education's Dropout Prevention Program were very close to the initial allocations. There was some shifting around among the budget categories, to some extent reflecting reallocations during the year. The middle school programs were farther from their targets, but this may be attributable to problems associated with initiating and setting up a complicated program. In the future we will assess whether these discrepancies indeed reflect start-up problems or not. Our primary goal for the future will be to examine the effectiveness for strengthening student retention of the overall expenditures and their particular distribution across the relevant budget categories and program components.

## Table C-7
## Distribution of Allocations and Expenditures
## New York City Department of Education Dropout Prevention Program
## **Middle Schools--Community School Districts**
## School Year--1985-1986

| Model | Budget Category | Allocation | Expenditures and Encumbrances |
|---|---|---|---|
| **CBO** | | | |
| | Pedagogic | 17.5 | 25.1 |
| | Non-Ped. | 7.8 | 6.2 |
| | OTPS | 4.9 | 4.8 |
| | CBO | 69.8 | 63.8 |
| | Total | 100 | 100 |
| **Project Connect** | | | |
| | Pedagogic | 48.4 | 54.2 |
| | Non-Ped. | 26.6 | 24.8 |
| | OTPS | 24.9 | 21.0 |
| | CBO | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| | Total | 100 | 100 |

# CHAPTER SEVEN
# FIRST YEAR EVALUATION ACTIVITIES

Data collection for the first year evaluation proceeded in three related directions: (1) field observation, interviewing, and student survey administration; (2) quantitative data collection; and (3) collection of budget information. Additionally, planning and staff training activities have supported each of the major data collection efforts.

## A. Field observation/interviewing.

The evaluation project staff was divided into four teams, each responsible for either nine or twelve schools (high schools and their feeder middle schools). Originally, the teams were each to be assigned to one of the four high school service delivery models; however, it was subsequently decided to cluster the schools geographically and give each team exposure to several different models. The goals of the first phase of field research were to assess program implementation and to administer a survey questionnaire to students in the program.

The following activities were completed:

1) Research assistants were hired and trained. By approximately five weeks after the beginning of the contract period, a full staff of research assistants were hired, oriented to the nature of the evaluation and the 42 different schools to be studied, and given initial training in data collection methodologies.

2) The student questionnaire was developed. (Described further under the section on quantitative data collection, below.) Again over a short time period, senior members of the evaluation team and additional consultants wrote, critiqued, and revised the questionnaire for students.

3) Project staff attended the two-day retreat of the Dropout Prevention Program high schools in early April. At this time, they met principals and DPP coordinators, described the evaluation project, and conducted initial interviews with key DPP personnel.

4) Introductory letters were sent to community school district superintendents, high school borough superintendents, principals of high schools and middle schools, and directors of community-based organizations. Follow-up phone calls were made.

5) Visits were made to all schools (and in some cases,

district offices) to introduce the evaluation team and make preliminary arrangements for data collection and survey administration.

6) Interviews were held with key school and CBO personnel, including the principal; AIDP or DPP facilitator/coordinator; CBO project director, site supervisor, and staff members; selected school administrators, guidance counselors, and teachers; and in some cases selected students. The interviews were structured around question protocols and were designed to elicit information about the nature of specific service components, issues of program implementation, and general characteristics of the schools. The interviews with principals, DPP/AIDP coordinators, and key CBO personnel were lengthy, lasting between 1 1/2 and 2 1/2 hours. The other interviews were generally shorter. The evaluation teams worked in two different ways: in some teams, each researcher was completely responsible for all interviews in 3-4 schools, while in other teams, the entire team visited all schools. Either way, approximately 3 person-days were spent interviewing school and CBO personnel.

7) A questionnaire survey was conducted in all schools, as well as with students in the academic program at Federation Employment Guidance Services (FEGS). (Also described in the section on quantitative data, below.) In the middle schools, the subjects were targeted students in the DPP program. In the high schools, all ninth and tenth grade students were surveyed. In most schools, evaluation team personnel were present for the surveys. Survey administration in the middle schools generally involved pulling students out of their regular classes during one or more class periods. In the high schools, the survey was administered in regular classes (usually the English classes) and took one complete day. Once the surveys were completed, the evaluation teams prepared the answer sheets for optical scanning, and they are currently being processed through the Columbia University computing center.

This general description of the survey administration hardly does justice to the complicated nature of the task. Due to the rather heroic efforts of the evaluation team members, several printers, and some school personnel, the surveys (in English, Haitian Creole, Spanish, Khmer and Vietnamese) and answer sheets were ready for use by mid-May. Given that we wanted to avoid administering the survey on Mondays and Fridays

(days of high student absences), needed to schedule the survey around district testing schedules, final exams, and Regents Competency Exams, and wanted to finish the survey as far before the end of the school year as possible, we had a very tight time schedule. Many of the schools were exceedingly cooperative. One school had special T-shirts made up for students who took the survey, and provided a special activity for the non-targeted students not included in the survey project. Other schools worked hard to add student OSIS numbers to every survey answer sheet. All schools were required to disrupt their schedules and ask teachers for extra cooperation, without the benefit of the flexibility a longer time frame could allow. Evaluation team members often spent a full day administering the survey in one school, and then spent the better part of the evening preparing packets for as many as 55 classes, with surveys, answer sheets, teacher instructions, and pencils included, for the next school. During the same time period, the interviews with school and CBO personnel were conducted. Thus, it was a heavy schedule for all individuals concerned.

However, as the analysis of survey responses indicates, by administering the survey at the end of the school year, we were unable to obtain responses from a very large proportion of the schools' populations, especially the targeted students.

8) Evaluation project staff participated in the summer institute for high schools in the Dropout Prevention Program. Meetings were held with the teams from each school, and project staff attended a number of workshops during the second week of the institute.

9) When school resumed in September, field researchers again visited school and CBO programs, to observe the start-up of year two and to collect additional data on the programs' first year.

B. Quantitative data collection.

The objective of the quantitative data analysis component of the first year of the evaluation project was to assemble the statistical information needed to describe students targeted for dropout prevention services, and to assess changes in student attendance, achievement, and attitudes among the different schools and among the different program models. The student statistical data came from two sources -- that collected by the Board of Education and that collected by the Teachers College survey.

1. Board-provided data.

The school board data, assembled by the Office of Educational Assessment, contained for high school students information on attendance, courses passed and failed, and achievement test scores. Data from the 1984-85 school year were also available. At the middle school level, data on attendance, courses passed and failed, and a coding of DPP services provided were made available to us. In addition to a one-time only OEA tape indication that a student had or had not received services in a given category, hand-calculated summaries of services in different categories were made available for each middle school by the Office of Student Progress.

2. Teachers College survey.

Between May 28 and June 27, questionnaires were administered to the targeted students in 28 of the 29 middle schools and to all students in the 9th and 10th grades in the 13 high schools. The survey was written especially for the drop-out project and covered the following topics:

a)Home background. These data are gathered primarily to permit statistical comparisons between programs and between schools which can control on family background differences of the student body, in order to isolate program effectiveness. The items measure the educational level of the students' parents, who the student lived with, the sorts of educational resources provided by the home, and the language spoken in the home.

b)Student attitudes. The questionnaire also assesses student attitudes toward the school and toward themselves. The principal attitude dimensions are self-esteem, locus of control, personal responsibility for success and failure, liking school, and educational aspirations.

The student is also asked for his perception of the school: whether two important classes (mathematics and language arts) are seen as enjoyable, efficient, well organized and not frequently disrupted by students. The student is asked whether he perceives the school as having a great deal of disruption, problems of violence, strong peer pressure for sexual activity and drug usage, and whether the school rules are seen as strict and fair. The questionnaire also measures a number of aspects of the students' behavior in school and after school, including such topics as participation in extra-curricular activities; contact with teachers, counselors and administrators; the relationship between the students' family and their educational responsibilities; the students' absences and reasons for them; the barrier which the parents' language constitutes in their communication with the school; whether the student has experienced career education; whether the student is involved in work in community center activities or in after school activities; and whether the student smokes and whether the student's closest friends are engaged in pro-social or anti-social behavior.

c)Services received. Finally, the bulk of the questionnaire is devoted to measurement of the school attendance-related programs which might impact among students. Students are asked whether they and their friends receive rewards for attendance, whether they receive any services to help them make the transition from middle school to high school or from high school into the world of work, whether their attendance is monitored, and whether they have received personal help with their attendance problem.

The educational environment questions and student attitude and perception questions are mainly derived from national surveys of middle school and high school students, including particularly the National Longitudinal Study of the High School Class of 1972; High School and Beyond; the survey conducted by IDEA for "A Study of Schooling"; the National Opinion Research Center survey written to evaluate the Emergency School Assistance Program; the Johns Hopkins University Quality of School Life questionnaire; the Effective School Battery; the System Development Corporation Survey used for the evaluation of the Emergency School Assistance Act; the RAND Corporation Survey used in the study of the voucher demonstration in Alum Rock School District; and the National Institute of Education's "Safe Schools" study. A number of other questionnaires were used as well.

The questionnaire was written in English and then translated at Teachers College into Spanish and Haitian Creole. In addition, educators in a high school volunteered, without pay, to translate the questionnaire into Khmer and Vietnamese.

Although the questionnaire was written on a tight time schedule, a limited amount of pre-testing with students was done and the questionnaire was reviewed by a number of people, including several members of the project steering committee. The pretesting determined that students in low-achievement classrooms could complete the questionnaire in a class period.

Administration of the questionnaire varied greatly from one school to another and from one community school district to another. In general it seems fair to say that there was little resistance to the questionnaire on the part of students. For a small group of students from strong conservative religious backgrounds, the question asking about sex was seen as offensive.

For other students, this question attracted the usual amount of adolescent embarrassment but was not otherwise a problem as far as we know. The questionnaire contains a number of opportunities for students to complain about their classes and their school; despite this, teachers seemed cooperative and helped to get the survey administered in many of the schools. We generally left it to the teachers' discretion whether the teacher should read the questionnaire aloud or whether the students should be allowed to read the questionnaire on their own.

The format in all five languages was identical; the student was given a printed questionnaire and asked to mark his answer on an optically scannable answer sheet. This is the system the students are used to because it is used for achievement testing. However, students were also asked to code their name and their student ID number on the form and this was difficult for a number of students to do. The evaluation project staff edited the questionnaires and in many cases coded in the student's name in computer readable marks after the student had printed his name on the form. The answer sheet was custom prepared, in order to make it as easy as possible for students to mark their answers in on the correct line (a common problem with the use of separate answer sheets is that students miscount and wind up coding the answer to question number 22 onto line 23, etc.).

It seems to us that the major administration problems with the survey stemmed from the resistance to the survey from senior administrators, school principals and community school boards. There was in fact relatively little resistance, although one community school district official complained about the questionnaire and we received a small number of responses from schools in that district. In other cases, once we made special visits to principals to reassure them about their concerns, the administration went smoothly. The main problem with the administration was that because of the traditional high absenteeism rates during June, it was extremely difficult to locate the targeted students (who were, after all, targeted because of their high absence rates). Many schools and many school staff people made special efforts, including in one case rewarding students who attended school to take the questionnaire and in other cases holding multiple sessions of questionnaire administration in order to give them a chance to catch more and more students.

## B. Collection of budget data.

The long term goals of this component of the evaluation are to develop an accurate overall accounting of the expenditures of the Dropout Prevention Program, and to disaggregate those expenditures in such a way as to enable us to compare the costs of six different models used in the program. Once we have outcome measures for each model, then with the appropriate cost data, we can compare the costs of achieving a particular outcome in the different models. While conceptually this is a straightforward process, it is complicated by variation among the schools in the quality of the administration and in the nature of the programs within the models -- that is, those administering the program in each school are given considerable latitude within the overall model to design their own program. (An additional complication concerns resources devoted to the program that are not reflected in the DPP budgets, but these will be addressed during the second year of the evaluation). Thus, the accounting system that we use must be able to help differentiate the effect of the model and the effect of variation within the model.

With these issues in mind, we developed an accounting matrix based on accounting categories used by the Board of Education. These include pedagogic personnel: teachers, supervisors, secretaries, guidance counselors, and other; non-pedagogic personnel: neighborhood workers, paras, and aides; CBO contracts; and OTPS: general office supplies, instructional supplies and equipment, and other OTPS. For the high schools, expenditures were also broken down by the seven categories of service components that comprise the dropout prevention programs.

This report covers information obtained through September 30, 1986. These data have been collected from four sources: the Office of the Superintendent for Dropout Prevention, the Office of High School Support Services, the Board of Education's Community School District Budget Unit, and the Board's Division of Accounts Payable.

The centrally provided data do not allow us to measure resources devoted to the program that are not budgeted. For example, principals might commit to the program general staff time or supplies that are not paid for by the DPP. If this is true, then ignoring these resources will result in an underestimation of the cost of the program. It might also bias the comparisons among the models, since it is reasonable to expect that more of this type of off-budget resources might be used in the systemic schools. Some accounting must also be made for non-recurring and capital costs. These problems will all require field work with the schools and will be addressed in the second year.

## METHODS OF DATA ANALYSIS

The material from field observations and interviews is, to some degree, inherently problematic. Researchers are in the field only a short time, different informants necessarily see things from different perspectives, and they value them differently. The task of analysis is first to sort out facts, claims, and judgments, including the researcher's own understanding of the material. Formally, the more conceptual explanatory frameworks are brought into focus later, to clarify, extend, and test the more empirical statements. In point of fact, they function aperceptively to guide the recognition and definition of facts, claims, and judgments from the beginning, and it becomes necessary to articulate them explicitly at some point, in order to carry out the analysis systematically.

The analysis of the implementation and the effects of a program needs to begin with questions at a descriptive level:

1. Are intended events occurring?
   a. Are they perceived to be occurring?
   b. What occurrence is documented?
2. Are unintended or unanticipated events occurring?
   a. Are they perceived to be occurring?
   b. What occurrence is documented?

Statements at the descriptive level must be separated from evaluative statements, but the analysis needs to be alert to evaluations:

1. How are these events evaluated?
   a. Are they perceived to have good or bad effects? By what criteria?
   b. Are they demonstrated to have good or bad effects? By what criteria?

The questions of demonstration especially connect to a more theoretical level, in relation to emerging patterns of events.

The evaluation team is using two primary perspectives to categorize and explain the status and effects to date of the Dropout Prevention Initiative. The first of these is drawn from organizational science, along with theories of innovation and the implementation of change. This perspective focuses on the structure and function of dropout prevention services in each of the program models, and seeks to explain the nature and effectiveness of those services in terms of the following:

a) Cultural factors. School practices are highly dependent on the meanings they hold for students, staff, and administrators -- how they fit in with the values and beliefs held by these groups. The belief system of a school community, along with its prevalent symbols and rituals, is said to comprise the school's culture, and educational innovations must somehow fit into a school's culture (or change that culture) if they are to succeed. In this study, we examine the prevailing values and beliefs of the school communities, along with their reciprocal effects on dropout prevention activities. We focus on how the schools' cultures support or resist changes brought about by initiating new services.

b. Structural factors. Schools, like other organizations, develop rational structures, roles, and processes by which they accomplish their explicit and implicit goals. Innovations usually attempt to change some aspect(s) of these structures and functions. The degree to which organizational regularities can be changed is one measure of the success of an innovation. This evaluation is designed to look at structural issues in two ways: first, how various features of schools contribute to student dropout and what effects structural changes have on the relationship between school organization and student attendance/achievement; and second, how structural variables figure into the process of program implementation.

c. Human resource factors. This orientation in organizational theory concerns various social psychological constructs such as personal motivations and drives, non-objective satisfactions derived from work, group processes and social relationships, and social pressures and control mechanisms. We will examine the implementation and effects of dropout prevention services in terms of their impact on person-centered characteristics of schools, and conversely will look at how these affect the delivery of services.

d. Economic factors. Somewhat connected to structural factors is the issue of what resources are available to support an innovation such as the Dropout Prevention Initiative. Here we will examine how the program is affected by constraints (or non-constraints) in budget, space, and time resources.

e. Political factors. Organizations can be described in terms of their decision-making processes, how they allocate power, and how conflicts among various groups and individuals are managed. In some schools, for example, policies mandated by central authorities may be resisted by front-line staff and be implemented quite idiosyncratically as a result. This evaluation will look at the policy and decision making aspects of program development and how issues of conflict and consensus figure into program implementation.

f. Ecological factors. Finally, programs and schools exist within environmental contexts which determine many aspects of their goals, resources, inputs, and outcomes. We will examine components of the environmental press causing dropout prevention efforts to succeed or fail, and also how a school negotiates its congruence or dissonance with its various environments -- parents, community, school district, and so on.

The second primary perspective focuses on students and their responses to the various programs. These responses are cognitive, affective, attitudinal, and behavioral. They include school attendance, participation in school and program activities, participation in nonschool activities, academic achievement, and school completion or dropping out.

Our theoretical model of the interaction between individuals and environments assumes that an individual's engagement in settings is a function of the match or congruence between his or her self (needs, motivation, competencies, style, beliefs, and values) and the press of the environment (its demands and potential satisfactions). A moderate discrepancy between self and press, for example between a student's language competence and the demand for language use in a given setting, is thought to be conducive to work, learning, and development within the boundaries of the setting. A large discrepancy, however, especially what the student perceives to be a large discrepancy, is likely to produce resistance or noncoping or withdrawal -- "misbehavior," "fight," or "flight" in relation to stress, just hanging around, or dropping out of school. Teachers, too, can respond in these ways to a mismatch with the demands and satisfactions of their work and life in school.

A good or bad "fit," which is another way psychologists talk about the match, can occur in any of the multiple arenas of the school: academics, recreation, governance, or sheer survival in the physical and social environment of the school. It can occur along any of the facets of the self, for example, beliefs or values, and their interface with dimensions of the environment. A mismatch can be the result of too little or too much press in relation to the school, for example, too little or too much press for achievement. Cultural variations, economic factors, and past experience can severally and together put an individual and an institution at risk of a mismatch that is larger than the individual feels he or she can deal with. Furthermore, certain personalities seem to be more vulnerable than others, particularly those with lower self-esteem or less internal sense of control, when discrepancies such as these are encountered.

The original proposal for this evaluation project pointed out that some individuals have been found to be more sensitive or susceptible to environmental forces than others. This is a theoretical interpretation of what it means to be "at risk." It is a framework for discovering not only what does not serve to maintain a student in school, but what does: what events or conditions challenge and support the student. The theory links the question of the student's persistence or dropping out to the properties of the organization, cultural, structural, and so on, that can be identified in the different perspectives on organizational change. It is thus an instrument for looking at the amount, the quality, and the appropriateness of Dropout Prevention Initiative services for students, in the context of both student and school characteristics, and of their interaction.

# GLOSSARY

Alternative educational programs - Programs that offer alternatives to the regular classroom experience for at-risk students; can include cultural experiences, job training, carer awareness, or academic instruction; one of the components of the Dropout Prevention Program

AI/DP -Attendance Improvement/Dropout Prevention; the state funded program

Attendance incentives - Special activities and awards to encourage and reward student attendance in school

Attendance outreach component - Follow-up on the absence of targeted students through telepohone calls, letters, and home visits in order to develop parent awareness

Automatic dialer -Computerized tape system for calling absent students' homes and giving a recorded message; also known as TELSOL system

Career education - Supplemental classroom instruction, two periods per week, which emphasizes the connection between school and future work experiences

Case management - Services targeted directly to the individual at-risk student

CBO - Community Based Organization

CSID - Comprehensive School Improvement Plan

Component -a particular area of service in the AIDP or DPP programs

Conflict resolution - Mediation techniques taught to students to reduce behavior problems

Coordinator - Title used in the DPP high schools for the person responsible for coordinating and monitoring all program activities

District coordinator - The person responsible for coordinating DPP and AI/DP programs in a community school district

Enterprise - Small business within an AIDP or DPP school, developed and run by targeted students

Extended school day -Mentoring, tutoring, insructional and recreational activities that take place before or after the regular school day to support academic achievement and encourage a more positive attitude toward school

Facilitator - Title used in the AIDP or DPP middle schools and AIDP high schools for the person responsible for coordinating and monitoring all program activities

Family assistant or worker - Title given to paraprofessional outreach workers, who monitor attendance and make home visits

Feeder school - Middle school linked with a local zoned high school

FEGS - Federated Employment and Guidance Services

GED - General Educational Development - Passing a GED examination leads to a high school equivalency diploma

Guidance and Counseling component - Appropriate services available to every targeted student, in order to address individual problems that may be contributing to poor attendance patterns; the Board of Education defines those who may officially give these services as a guidance counselor, psychologist, social worker, or SAPIS counselor

Health Worker/Career Counselor - CBO staff member who assists the school health team in screening, referring, monitoring health center attendance, and also conducts career awareness and business enterprise experiences

Health services component - Diagnostic screening of students in physical, psychological, and educational areas, referral for appropriate follow-up services

IS - Intermediate School

JHS - Junior High School

LEP - Limited English Proficiency

Linkage component - Program includes addressing the problems of students making the transition from one level of school to another and the development of relationships between the staffs and students at middle schools and high schools

Longitudinal study - A three year study of the at-risk students to determine the changes in attendance, achievement, and attitude

LTA - Long term absence; used to denote students who are absent from school for at least a month

Mandated services - Those services that the high schools and middle schools are required to provide under the DPP program

Mentor program - Counseling and tutoring of small groups of students, using strategies to encourage the students to attend school

Model A - Middle schools using services of a CBO for all components except facilitation and sometimes attendance outreach

Model B - Middle schools using Project Connect program, whereby all services are provided by school personnel

Model 1 - Pure CBO high school model (AIDP) which provides all services for a targeted population, except facililtation and health services, which are provided by school staff members

Model II - Pure systemic, in which all services are provided to the total school population without the use of CBOs

Model III - Modified CBO, in which CBOs services are used, but the number of students served and budget allocation are directly tied to the school population and dropout rate

Model IV - Modified systemic in which larger schools use the pure systemic components with the additional services of a CBO case-management approach

OEA - Office of Educational Assessment of the NYC Board of Education

OFP - Office of Funded Programs of the NYC Board of Education

OS - Operation Success; a work readiness and experience program which provides counseling guidance, work experience, skills training, and family support, provided by FEGS

OSIS -Office of Student Information Services of the NYC Board of Education

OSP - Office of Student Progress, NYC Board of Education

OTPS - Other Than Personal Services; budget category for supplies, equipment etc.

PC - Project Connect; the name of the DPP program in the middle schools not using CBO staff; all services by NYC Board of Education staff

PCT, PEP - Standardized tests

PREP - Preparation for Raising Educational Performance, remedial academic program for entering ninth grade students

Program models - Types of programs used to deliver the the dropout services

Pullouts - Removing students from regularly scheduled classes in order to give them other services

PPC - Pupil Personnel Committee consisting of representatives of various school instructional and support services, (possibly parents and community agencies also), who are responsible for recommending and following up on a comprehensive framework of services for each eligible student

Security component - Increased security consisting of automated entry, guards and hardware; part of DPP high schools' program

SAPIS - Substance Abuse Prevention and Intervention Services

Summer Institute - A team from each DPP high school attends a three week summer institute for developing plans and materials and for building a team approach that promotes team ownership of the DPP program

Systemic - Services that are intended to affect the total school population

Target group - Those students who meet the criteria for participation in the AIDP or DPP program

TELSOL - The automatic dialing system used for attendance outreach

Youth worker - Part-time staff hired to serve as advocates and role models for at-risk students by providing emotional and academic support before and after the school day

# EVALUATION OF THE NEW YORK CITY DROPOUT PREVENTION INITIATIVE

## FINAL REPORT FOR YEAR ONE

## Appendices 1-6:
## Analysis of 1985-86 Program Implementation by Middle School and High School Models

by

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# APPENDIX 1:
# SCHOOL-BASED CASE MANAGEMENT MIDDLE SCHOOLS

The field researchers' case studies of 15 middle schools in which a school-based case management DPP model ("Project Connect") was supposed to have been implemented were systematically compared and analyzed to yield this report. The analysis of each area of program services will be reported separately.

Where statistical ranges are given, for example, estimates of the proportion of targeted students who have been reached in one way or another, these represent the outer limits of the numbers that are available at this time, and do not necessarily represent all the schools. More complete statistics will be available when the monthly summary reports to the Office of Student Progress have been transcribed to computer tape.

## Identification of targeted students

Nearly all of the schools had between 140 and 155 students on their rosters in May or June, the exceptions being a school that had a roster of 180 and another with a roster of 127. These rosters were developed by an initial scrutinizing of school records for potentially eligible students, a monitor's reviewing and often challenging the eligibility of some (for example, for being excessively truant), and some students being discharged from the school and others entering during the year and being found eligible. The turnover of students was claimed to be 40% in the general population of one of the schools, and was apparently high in a number of the others, if not most.

Without exception, the facilitator was the key person in a school's selection of students for the program. In a few cases the facilitator worked almost alone, but usually he or she had the assistance of a family worker and/or an aide. In at least four cases, the principal seems to have been substantially involved in the selection of DPP students, either initially or in reviewing and amending the selection. In three of these four cases, furthermore, a school guidance counselor was involved in the selection, which in the remaining schools tended not to be the case. These four schools turn out to be ones that were noted to have good communication in the relationships between the DPP staff and school staff generally, and good feelings of the general staff toward DPP staff. Among the remaining schools, such good relationships were more the exception than the rule. From the very inception of the program, then, it appears that the principal's active participation, rather than just his or her confidence in the facilitator, was associated with the program's well being.

There were several other schools in which, while the administration does not seem to have played a substantial part in the identification of targeted students, teachers did. Teachers did not participate uniformly, however. Rather, it seems to have occurred through the facilitator's networking, with some teachers feeling included and others in the same school saying they had no input into the selection. The result may have been that the list was not as mechanical a product as some perceived a list made up "by the numbers" to be. On the other hand, this inclusion of some teachers through networking was often not enough to stave off jealousies or other negative sentiments directed toward DPP staff, especially the facilitator, by staff who were not included in the program. These negative feelings toward the facilitator were found in half of all the cases, and seemed to stem from a variety of causes, which will unfold as the analysis proceeds.

Schools that had to dip lower into the criteria for identification of targeted students, that is, shifting from 30 to 75 days' absence, more toward combinations of fewer absences with low reading scores, course failures, or latenesses, got to exercise more discretion in this way, as did, on the other end, schools that had so many students in the 30 to 75 days' absence range that discriminations could be made as to which among these to select. In no school was there evidence of a systematic "creaming" of students who were likely to succeed, unless one were to apply this term to the general policy of excluding heavy truants or LTA's. Still, the inclusion in some schools of all or most students within the range of 30 to 75 days' absence meant that some targeted students made the list for what staff called "exceptional" reasons--a lengthy visit to another place, usually Puerto Rico, or a serious or chronic illness. These students were weeded out in some schools, for example through interviewing candidate students as to why they were absent. In other schools, their selection was acknowledged by program staff and tended to be used by other staff to question the validity of attendance gains in the program.

One of the facilitators interviewed all the potential participants to explain to the students what the program was about and to challenge them or allay their fears, as the case might require. S/he then gave the student an envelope addressed to the parent, containing on the inside a request for permission, and on the outside the words, GOOD NEWS. In greater or lesser degree, the program staff were concerned to be positive about students' selection for the program. They preferred that it be known as the "attendance improvement program" rather than as a "dropout prevention program," to avoid the negative connotations of the term 'dropout'.

In virtually every school, key persons argued for greater flexibility of the selection criteria. There are two aspects of this wished for flexibility, a broadening of the range of students to be included, and staff's having greater discretionary judgment in the process of selection.

Some of the conditions that staff thought should make students eligible for the program included a student's "heading for trouble," "a problem developing," "a disaster like the mother has died," "a behavior problem," "something you catch before the problem has crystallized." Other conditions suggested were course failures and latenesses, but not necessarily accompanied by frequent absences. Staff wanted to intervene early, when there were signals of trouble to come. In several schools, staff wanted to start the program in grade 7 or, in one case, grade 6, where it had been confined to grades 8 and 9 or 7 and 8. There were scattered but serious suggestions that such a program should begin in the elementary school.

In a third of the schools there were staff who felt that more seriously-truant students should be included in the program.

In another, mostly different, third of the schools there were staff who argued that all of the students in the school were at risk, or at least that none should be excluded from the distribution of the DPP resources. This was especially an issue in relation to the program's use of incentives, and will be discussed below under Attendance Outreach.

In some schools, students who were dropped from the official list because they were disallowed by the monitor from the Office of Student Progress, were nonetheless maintained in the program so as not to deprive them of services that had begun.

Several schools anticipate a real problem if they have to drop students in 1986-87 whose attendance improved in 1985-86. It is feared that some of the students will regress if program supports are not continued. Students and staff have developed allegiances to each other, and it has been predicted that some staff will be burdened by continuing these relationships even though they are not officially counted in next year's list.

The provision for 20% of the students in the program for 1986-87 to be selected at the discretion of staff is expected to meet some, but not all, of the needs staff have expressed. However, which categories of students, based on intake characteristics, can best be served by the programs, and by which specific program features, is a question that can only be approached very gradually.

Program facilitation.

Every facilitator had a very demanding job. The identification of students and ongoing revision of the targeted list, interpretation of the roles of the various DPP staff and staff from the rest of the school, planning of activities, communication at various levels within and outside the school, obtaining supplies, conducting career education and/or enterprise activities, supporting the activities of program and nonprogram staff, training staff, managing the incentive system of trips and prizes, interacting with students, and last but not least, maintaining records, was all consuming.

Most of the facilitators had been classroom teachers, several of them in social studies and the rest in scattered other subjects. Several of them had had experience as deans or assistant principal, and one had been employed in the school attendance office. The very fact of their application for the post suggested their interest in the target population, and some of them stated that when they applied for the job they thought they would be able to spend a lot of their time giving direct service to the students. Nonetheless, the administrative and paperwork demands of the job so exceeded their expectations, whatever they might have been told to expect, that very few facilitators were able to give as much direct service to students as they desired.

In one way or another all of the facilitators characterized the job as nearly impossible. Without exception, the principals too saw it as a very exacting job, and in only one case did a principal not praise the facilitator effusively. The facilitators could go to nearly all the principals for help with this or that specific problem. However, what was true with respect to the initial task of identifying students was mirrored in other components of the program as well, viz., that it was in those relatively few cases where the principal was more proactive in support of the DPP facilitator that the project seemed to flourish best. This included explaining the program to staff, promoting teachers' involvement with the program, and establishing priorities that were congruent with the program's aims.

Teachers' support for the facilitator was highly variable. There were several cases where, as with the principal, the teachers both held the facilitator in high esteem and gave him or her active support, particularly cooperating around attendance records and, a more selective matter, responding to the facilitator's request for teachers to participate in the extended-day mentoring activities (see below). There was at least one case that was the opposite of this, teachers not respecting the facilitator's capabilities but nonetheless participating fairly extensively in the program's activities. Many of the remaining cases are more confused, with some admiration of the facilitator being mixed with jealousy of the program's resources (see the discussion of trips and prizes, below), and possibly of the facilitator's power or relationship to the principal. This seems to have made it more difficult for the facilitators to recruit teachers to participate. The facilitators themselves, however, saw their status as much more ambiguous. They were neither teacher nor administrator, neither fish nor fowl. In particular, these facilitators thought the teachers perceived them as having an easy life, spending money and having fewer periods to teach. The teachers' having more accurate information about the facilitator's job in particular, and the DPP program in general, appears to be one area in which the principal's leadership would help.

Space seemed to be adequate for the facilitator's work in only about half the schools. This appeared to be a function of crowding in the school generally, not just of the priority assigned to the program.

The facilitators felt they got strong support from the community school district offices in about half the cases, and in some of these cases support that was stronger than they received from their principals. This extended from initial guidelines for setting up the program to trouble-shooting all kinds of problems along the way. However, the Community School Districts were also seen as part of the process of imposition of the program on the schools from the top; they were thought in some cases to be not as likely to relay back to the top the facilitators' suggestions for change, as to convey to them the ever-changing mandates. The role of the CSOs in the implementation of the DPP would be exceedingly interesting to study in depth (including their relationship to the CBOs).

Feedback that the facilitators received from the Office of Student Progress seemed to be regarded as useful and supportive in virtually all of the schools.

## Attendance monitoring and outreach.

In all of the schools DPP staff obtained the daily attendance after official class. In some schools this entailed going to each official class teacher and collecting a separate attendance sheet, in some it meant checking absence lists submitted by classes to the attendance secretary or para, and in a few in which attendance was computerized a separate printout for DPP students, including the students' home telephone numbers, was easily furnished. In some schools, attendance checks were also carried out during different class periods, to find out if students were in school who had not checked in for official class, or if students who had checked in were absent from a class.

Typically, it was the family worker(s) and/or a program aide who used the attendance reports to see which students should receive telephone calls, letters, and home visits. In one school where the family workers were unable to function in the job (one was a drug addict who ran away, the other a person under psychiatric care who took an extended absence), the facilitator was unable to carry out the attendance monitoring responsibility.

About half of the schools had automatic dialers in operation before the end of the year, in a couple of cases, at least, purchased with other funds. Three more schools had acquired automatic dialers but were not able to use them, in one case because it had been stolen. Some schools that used automatic dialers stressed their harrassment value, or just letting someone at home know both that the student was absent and that the school was keeping track of this. In all the schools, personal phone calls were made, sometimes doubling up on the automated calls both for the more personal effect and to increase the pressure on the home.

As was the case generally with information that the evaluators knew would be duplicated in the monthly summaries of service submitted by the schools to the Office of Student Progress, the DPP staff were not asked systematically how many phone calls they made, letters they wrote, or home visits they conducted. In two different schools it was indicated that family assistants made about 40 phone calls per day. In one school it was pointed out that fully a third of the targeted students did not have telephones; this would be important to find out about more generally, since these students are harder to reach. Inspection of the attendance outreach records for individual students shows that many calls, for example 6 per month over most of the year, might be made to the home of one student, that several different members of the family (father, mother, sister) might have responded at different times, and that a variety of reasons might be given for the students' absence at different times (ill, grandfather's illness, stomach virus, out with mother, did not know why student was absent). Still, phone calls were said to be effective for increasing some students' attendance, especially wake-up phone calls, which several of the schools used and claimed were effective. In one school, it was stressed that phone calls were also made to reinforce parents for their children's attendance at school.

In the typical sequence encountered, a letter was sent out if an absence continued after a phone call had been made, or if no phone was available, and then a home visit was scheduled. Home visiting was the one DPP feature that was valued by virtually everyone interviewed, whether they were hostile to other elements of the program or not. The family workers themselves stressed that they as often as not had to deal with the problems of a parent: the parent who was using the child to provide security for the home, to take care of a younger child, or to take care of a sick parent herself or himself. Cases were cited where the parent kept a child home so that he or she would not be abused at school, or where a parent made a girl stay home after school and in the evening, but the girl, unbeknownst to the parent, skipped school so that she could be with friends on her own time. Some problems encountered required that the family be referred to an agency; in other cases the family was more available to support the school in pressing the student to attend. That the school was represented by someone whose social experience in some ways was similar to that of the students' families was important. It is not clear whether racial identity as such was important, but bilingualism was said to facilitate communication and to promote trust. Some family workers said further, that having dealt with social and economic obstacles in their growing up helped their relating to students at risk. One hypothesizes that the effect of all of this was multiplied by the family worker's paraprofessional skills. A family worker's being bilingual was thought to be essential in many cases.

Estimates of the percentage of time given to home visiting by family workers varied between 25% and 40%. Several estimates of home visits family workers made varied from 6 per week to 25 per week. Estimates of the percentage of home visits that were completed, i.e ., that resulted in a contact, varied from less than 50% to 75%. It was noted that, even if a parent was not home, word sometimes got around from other neighbors who observed a visit, so that a student might come and ask, "How come the school came to my house?"

It was said in about two-thirds of the schools that the number of home visits that were possible had been greatly reduced by the amount of paperwork that family workers and the staff generally had to complete. At least in these schools, it appeared that paperwork required more time of family workers than was allowed for home visiting. In one school, an attempt is being made to shift the burden of the paperwork to an aide, but this will probably have only a limited impact on the problem.

Another constraint on home visiting was the safety issue. Female family workers especially were urged to travel in pairs, and certain neighborhoods or buildings were not deemed safe enough for family workers to visit.

A problem that came up in a couple of schools was family workers' needing to respond to requests that they visit the homes of students who were not in the program.

A couple of schools made specific arrangements to facilitate the re-entry of students who had been absent a long time to the classroom, but in most schools it appears that there was not enough coordination between the DPP program and the academic program to make this re-entry support possible. Short of this, the DPP staff themselves generally tried to reinforce students' return to school by frequent in-school contacts. A lot of the counseling (see below) was said to take place informally as students dropped in and out of the DPP office, or staff traveled around to classrooms. The specific patterns of this, and their variations from school to school, would be important to describe.

Trips, construed as an incentive and reward for improved attendance, were a regular feature of the program in all of the schools. What number of trips a program conducted, or how many students went on trips, is only suggested in the case studies of the schools. In one school there may have been only one trip a month, in another there seemed to be more than this many trips on school days alone, plus hikes every second or third Saturday.

Trips were much more prominent in the accounts of some facilitators than of others. They stressed the value of the trips for creating rapport between staff and students, for students getting to know the city and new cultural arenas, students developing skills, and their gaining self knowledge and mutual esteem with other students. Some facilitators particularly made an effort to include teachers who were not otherwise involved in DPP on trips or hikes with their students. For these reasons there was an effort to use "incentives" criteria flexibly. Where only a few students could be taken on a given trip, these students might have the highest attendance or attendance improvement. But for other trips there seemed to be many ways a student could qualify, sometimes just by signing up.

The perceived rationale of the trips seemed to vary from school to school, and from one student to another. It was discovered in one school that some students had been on as many as six trips; some students perceived that the program facilitator only wanted to ask the students the facilitator could count on to come. This seemed to be incongruent with both the motivational and the developmental rationales for the trip program. Other students in the same school and in different schools, however, made it quite clear that the trips gave them something to come to school for.

The schools varied also in their policies for awarding prizes: calculators, alarm clocks, t-shirts, trophies, and so on for improved attendance. In one school the facilitator was very strict in awarding the prizes, the criterion had to be met to the letter. Some award was given each month for students who maintained a certain attendance. Students who were short by one day might try to bargain, but the facilitator would only encourage them to try harder next month. In another school, a student who was still absent frequently but whose attendance at school had improved, or even a student who attended an after-school activity with some frequency, could be rewarded. The effects of these different policies on the students'attendance have not been established.

The bureaucratic procedures attached to purchasing gifts, trip tickets, supplies for alternative educational activities, and the like, turned out to be very time-consuming and frustrating for many of the facilitators, especially those who did not have previous experience with school administration.

In at least a third of the schools, the largesse of the programs in distributing trips and gifts was found to be very divisive. Students who were not in the program were said to be very envious, and to be asking why they, whose attendance might have been better, could not also go on the trips or get the prizes. When questioned about this in interviews, nonprogram students tended to be generous in saying they thought it was OK for those students whose attendance was helped by the trips or prizes to be getting them, but they remarked also that they only got to go on one trip, or no trip at all. The students had also voiced the latter reactions to staff, and in some schools this played into non-DPP staff's own feelings about the program's having so much incentive money, including, if one may, the money that could be used to attract teachers to participate. Two principals remarked that the DPP program had more budget to use in these ways than the rest of the school combined. When one facilitator was absent from a faculty conference, because in fact he was trying to catch up on his records, it was remarked, "Oh, so-and-so must be on his yacht!" These reactions were upsetting to the facilitators themselves, who were at the same time being pressured to spend their money in various categories. In some cases they included some non-DPP students on trips and in other alternative educational activities (see below). In one school, a practice of giving incentive awards to students generally moderated the impact of the awards given especially to DPP students.

### Guidance and counseling, Pupil Personnel Committee.

Outside of the high school selection process, the amount of formal individual and group counseling offered to targeted students seems to have varied from almost none in some schools to mostly referral counseling in a majority of the schools and a more extensive program of counseling in a few of the schools. This was complemented by group guidance offered regularly in a few of the career education courses and also in conjunction with breakfast in a couple of schools, and by a substantial amount of informal individual and group guidance or advisement in virtually all of the schools.

A first key to understanding the guidance picture is the nature of the services that were available to the DPP program from a certified guidance counselor in the school.

In one school, a guidance counselor hired for supplemental services to the program was regarded as an indispensable part of the program, someone who had excellent relationships with the students and their parents, worked well with staff, and spent many extra hours on the job. In another school, a school counselor who was characterized as devoted to the program was assigned 50% to the program, much of it in individualized attention to the target population. In a third school, a separate DPP counselor position had been budgeted but not filled, and a regular guidance counselor was assigned 50% to the program. This counselor too was perceived as highly professional and dedicated, but with over 1600 students to serve in the remainder of the school, was overworked and could not do justice to either half of the assignment. In a fourth school, one of three regular guidance counselors worked especially closely with the program, but went on leave in March; the remaining two counselors had almost no contact with the program; this school had a SAPIS worker. And in a fifth school, one counselor was responsible for the entire school, including students applying to high school, but had the assistance of deans who also had counseling backgrounds, and in addition had a close relationship to the facilitator.

Two schools had not been able to fill a counselor position that had been budgeted for the program, in one case because the Community School District office had not approved the school's selection of a white (orthodox Jewish) person to counsel minority students (though the person was said to have been well received by students and staff), and in the other because the counselor appointed to the position was subsequently made an assistant principal. The administration in both schools was trying to cope with the situation. In another couple of schools, one with two guidance counselors and one with only one, a fairly regular system of cross-referral seemed to be in effect between the guidance office and the DPP program, which at least served some needs for crisis counseling. In five more schools, most if not all of them having just one guidance counselor, communication between the guidance office and the DPP office appeared to be minimal. Finally,in one school there was no guidance counselor.

In most of the schools, it might still be concluded that the guidance and counseling component of the program was, as intended, an add-on to the services that could ordinarily be expected, given the variation in these services that usually results from variations in both the personnel and the counselor-student ratios in the schools. However, a more comprehensive integration of the school and program services was found, at best, in only half of the schools.

Somewhat contradicting the import of this portrayal of relationships with the guidance counselors, a Pupil Personnel Committee was found in nearly every school, and in most cases a guidance counselor participated on the committee. Of course, for logistical reasons alone it is to be expected that DPP staff would have easier access to the guidance counselors than would DPP students. Some of the committees were described as meeting as often as once a week, most were said to meet twice a month, a couple met 6 or 7 times, and one was said to have met infrequently. Accomplishments of these committees that were cited in the schools included playing an important part in the planning, follow through, and evaluation of the DPP program; reviewing present ideas, incentives, and a newly introduced school newspaper; planning strategies for particular students, discussing/making recommendations for individual cases, and planning a parent workshop on drugs and teenage pregnancy; focusing on the 30 most difficult cases and then on overall problems; and monitoring which students needed services. In a few of the schools the functioning of the committee seems to have been more casual than the schedule of meetings suggests, i.e., some individuals who were identified as members of the committee said it didn't meet as a group.

Most of the facilitators were keenly interested in the guidance of youth. At least two of them had training in counseling, and several of them clearly regarded themselves as the best qualified person available to counsel the students. However, the post did not have the legal status of counselor. Trips and career education, including the enterprises, were the principal sanctioned outlet for the facilitator's guidance goals, which partly accounts for the special energy that the facilitators tended to invest in one or another of these activities. Trips have been mentioned above. Some of the facilitators saw more opportunity for guidance in the career education classes than did others, and they carried out activities that were intended to promote self-esteem, values clarification, oral communication skills, and job and career development. In a few of the schools these activities might be characterized as group guidance.

The family workers, as paraprofessionals, were explicitly told that they were not supposed to give advice to the students. That they could not take the students outside the building for a talk over pizza, nor indeed escort a student from home to school, constantly reminded them of the legal parameters of the situation. This, however, was rather like the experience of encountering a sign that says "Road legally closed for repairs" when one is driving down a highway. In at least two districts the family workers and the SAPIS workers (below) participated in district level workshops that certainly skated on advisory or counseling issues: child abuse, how to reach children, pregnancy prevention, and so on. More generally, the family workers were said to be "approachable" by students, sharing some of the same experience with the students, and in many cases their language. As indicated before, the family workers tended to have many informal contacts with the students in the school, as well their encounters with them outside. What might be surmised from all of this is that the family workers were unofficially regarded as more than a supplement to the counseling program, and that in at least some schools a division of labor took place that shifted to the DPP staff a substantial share of the counseling burden.

Several of the schools had a SAPIS (Substance Abuse Prevention and Intervention Services) worker in lieu of a supplementary guidance counselor. These individuals had more authority to conduct counseling--whether or not they actually had more training for it--than the family workers, but on the other hand they were not perceived as having the clinical skills a counselor is expected to have. Their styles of working with program staff and with students varied greatly, but they tended to be oriented toward crisis counseling. Like the family workers, their social experience tended to be more similar to that of the students than the experience of the guidance counselors.

Teacher-mentors seem to have carried out a substantial advisement of students through a breakfast program in a couple of schools. Mentoring was associated with breakfast and before- and after-school academic and recreational activities in a number of the schools, but how much guidance thrust they had appears to have varied greatly. In some schools, it was felt that not enough students come before or after school to take advantage of mentoring, so that it was not an adequate substitute for regularly available counseling.

Up to the present point in this discussion of guidance and counseling, most of the emphasis has been on the availability of staff to perform the services. A point that was particularly emphasized in some of the schools, however, was that a relatively small percentage of the students, variously estimated at 10% and 20% of the targeted population, could occupy much or most of the time and energy staff had to offer. This particularly needs attention in the forthcoming research, both as to the success staff had with the students in question and the effect this concentration of effort had on other students in the program and the school.

Staff of most of the programs feel that they have had a positive impact on many of the students and have turned at least some students around. Undoubtedly there is an important guidance and counseling component of this. Apart from the questions raised here about the sufficiency of the services available to the students as a whole, the research must also come to understand what individual students gain when they do experience these services, and, at the program or school level of analysis, what student gains are associated with a particularly well implemented guidance and counseling component. In 1985-86, perhaps three of the fifteen schools had a program that appeared to be realizing the model. Plans have been made to deal with some of the problems recognized in other schools, so that in 1986-87 more schools may be found to have a strong guidance and counseling component, in or articulated with the DPP program.

## Health services

The health component of DPP was intended to be a linkage to the health resource person or coordinator of a school, whereby the program would facilitate the coordinator's conducting health screenings, including obtaining background information and permission from parents for services to the students; and through which the program could refer students to the health coordinator for needed service, and facilitate further referals or followup. Several variables affected the realization of this goal. First, whereas some schools articulated health goals more or less clearly, program staff and/or principals in several schools said that the idea of this component was not clear to them, or indeed that no DPP health component was intended. Second, the regular health resources of the schools varied tremendously, from there being no health coordinator on a regular basis, to a school's having made health a top priority and secured extra resources for all of its students. Third, the facilitators themselves had different priorities for health, and/or different resources for responding to these priorities. In one school, forms were given to the students to have their families complete; very few of the forms were returned initially, but a family worker then visited many of the homes; responses were secured in 100 out of the 137 cases then on the list, either reporting an examination by a family health provider or giving permission for the school to arrange for the examination; and the family worker escorted 15 students and their parents to a local hospital to complete examinations. In another school, a trip was offered as an incentive for students returning the forms from their families, but few were brought back, and the program had to assume that most of the students had health providers and did not need the school's service. Records of health complaints and services were maintained in some, but not all of the DPP offices. Vision and hearing screenings were carried out extensively for the targeted students in some, perhaps most of the schools--this was not established in the evaluation interviews.

It might be judged that four schools implemented the DPP-health unit linkage extensively, and another two made substantial progress in this direction. In one case, a school facilitated examinations, including transportation to the hospital site, for over 50% of the targetted students; many of these students had not been examined for years. In another, there was extensive participation in both general and vision and hearing screenings, whole day workshops for students on asthma, dental check ups, and a nutrition unit brought in from Cornell. In most of the schools, on the other hand, health was explicitly regarded as one of the weakest components of the DPP program.

### School level linkages.

There was no school in which linkages between the middle school and the zoned high school were considered successful. Various possible factors can be looked at to try to understand this. In several of the middle schools, a member of the school staff other than the facilitator was appointed to be in charge of the linkage with the high school; however, these schools were no more or less successful than those in which no special person was appointed. The articulation coordinator of one of the linked high schools was perceived in all three feeder middle schools as dynamic, projecting a positive attitude toward the students, open to their questions, and imaginative in arranging visits between the two schools. But this did not overcome the negative image students (or possibly counselors) had of the high school in question, and not more than 10% chose the high school from any of the three feeder schools. Again, this high school and at least one other offered an extensive program of afterschool activities and courses that middle-school students were invited to participate in, participation was extensive from several of the feeder schools, but for neither high school did this produce a significant increase in applications from the feeder schools.

Outside of the middle schools associated with the two high schools indicated above, there were only four in which as many as a quarter of the targeted students appeared to have visited the linked high school,and these again did not produce many applications. Comments in several cases were that the high school was not cooperative, or was not ready, or did not follow up, or was weak in attracting students. It was said equally often that students did not want to go the high school.

Overriding all of these factors was the negative image of the linked high schools that the students in virtually all of the middle schools were said to hold. In the view of a few guidance counselors queried, these images persisted despite efforts in some of the high schools to change them; two of the counselors saw the high schools in question as better than the students saw them, suggesting that it is not just a matter of the counselors, at least in these cases, steering the students away from these schools. Specific high schools that the students preferred were often named, some of them schools that were linked with other feeder middle schools, but more of them magnet schools or schools with special programs, including computer and athletic facilities. It would be important to study these student perceptions of the high schools directly, to find out how much they are influenced by program options of the high schools and how much by more affective factors such as knowing other students there, or general climate.

One of the middle schools developed a linkage with a high school that was not the zoned school, but that was preferred by its students. At least some facilitators received late in the year a memorandum that gave the name of an individual to contact in each of the high schools. It was observed, however, that it is very hard to arrange a visit unless you know someone in a school, that many of the schools are not interested in the targeted students' visiting.

Still another overriding factor that was mentioned in several schools was the fact that the middle schools and the high schools are administered separately, so that issues of communication, budget, responsibility and authority came into play. A small example of this was the difficulty of implementing programs of high school students tutoring middle school students, which was greatly delayed in one high school and did not materialize in another. The linkage is made more difficult by this independence of the two systems, if not inherently limited by it. This fact probably affects the investment that personnel in either the middle school or the high school make in the linkage, since they are not directly accountable to one another and have no assurance that their own investment will be reciprocated in the partner school. It will be particularly useful to study in greater depth those linkages that have so far been stronger, to compare the processes at work in these schools with those in others, and to see to what extent they succeed over time in overcoming the negative images held by students, including adaptation of the high schools to the students' feedback.

The other side of the linkage question may be that DPP students were being admitted to a wide variety of high schools. In one of the middle schools, targeted students were said to have been admitted to 18 different high schools, and in another 26 high schools. The research should check this out more generally. It may be that more information that was not summarized in the case studies has already been collected in the schools, and that both the guidance offices in the schools and the student records to be analyzed in the longitudinal study will be further sources of information.

### Alternative educational programs

Alternative education was comprised of career education and enterprises during the regular school day, and extended day activities, before or after school, that tended to be academic, enrichment, or recreational activities.

The idea of the enterprise activities was to give students hands-on, productive work. Enterprises that had a money-making dimension included a school store, duplicating materials for classrooms, selling sweatshirts, growing and selling plants, and the making and selling of buttons, newspaper fireplace logs, paintings and photographs, and chocolate candy. Other enterprises were a security patrol, in which the students reported they patrolled the halls and got a lot of "heavy talks" from adult security personnel, a project that made set designs for all of the school assemblies, a peer-tutoring project, and a Valentines Day Flower Sale that turned the whole school on for a day. Some of these activities, for example the flower sale and the making of set designs, were appreciated by teachers as well as by the students, for one thing because they directly benefited from them. Others, for example, chocolate making, were appreciated more by the students than by teachers outside the program, though a home economics teacher's cooperating in this in one school was a breakthrough for the facilitator in securing faculty support. Certain activities, for example making buttons, may have had almost a "make work" quality for the students in some schools--"you have to make buttons,"--while others had a more enterprising quality. These latter might have been those in which the offerers, in most cases the facilitator, were especially invested themselves, through their imagination and talent in creating the enterprise.

DPP students were expected to have career education and/or enterprises for two hours a week. Time for this was scheduled through pulling the students out of minor subjects. On the one hand this meant that career education was a relatively regular part of the students' DPP experience, and that at the same time the targeted students remained integrated with other students in their minor subjects. On the other hand, the pulling out itself was "a thorn in the side of the teachers" in many of the schools, possibly because of what it implied about the importance of "minor" subjects, as well as because of the disruption to their teaching and the students' learning. Several facilitators expressed dismay that career education was being mandated for more time per week in 1986-87, saying it would increase the programming problem.

It appears that in nearly all of the schools, it was the facilitator who taught whatever combination of career education and/or enterprises that the students received. However, this was clearly not the case in one school; the monitor's reports should clarify it for the others. Since it was also clear that the career education and enterprises teacher in this one school was as qualified and successful in his/her role as the facilitator was in his/hers, the question is of more than just bureaucratic interest.

In a few of the schools, only career education was offered, not enterprises. In another few, only enterprises were offered. In about half of the schools, the facilitators offered both. However, this was more the situation at the end of the year. It might be that only career education was offered at the outset, but some of the facilitators just about abandoned it for the enterprises. These facilitators thought that, in the words of one, the last thing in the world that the students needed was another formal course, and that the enterprises offered an opportunity for more active learning. Other facilitators, however, saw more possibilities in the class situation. The relative attention to the course approach vs. enterprises seems to have been influenced partly by what district the schools were in, which would reflect two factors. First, the community school district offices may have supported different approaches, as they did also with respect to other components of the program. Second, the facilitators in some of the districts met informally as well as formally and shared ideas. The facilitators in two schools, at least, also collaborated on trips, and interpreted them as much as alternative education and guidance as attendance outreach.

As was recognized above, various facilitators carried out activities that were intended to promote self-esteem, values clarification, oral communication skills, and job and career development. Students were provided with a medium for discussing issues related to school, social and economic reasons for dropping out, and the general quality of life. Practice of interviewing skills, discussion of appropriate work behavior, and field trips to various job sites, were included in one or another facilitator's course. A few schools seemed to have a more coherent program than the others.

In about a quarter of the schools there were no enterprise activities, in about half there were one or two, and in a quarter there were four or more. These numbers are more or less inversely proportional to the extent of the career education courses as such. Some of the enterprises counted here did not get going until late in the year, because of delays in obtaining materials. The adequacy of space for these activities, and indeed for the career education courses, varied considerably from school to school.

Before-school activities were conducted in almost two-thirds of the programs, and after-school activities in nearly all of the programs. Academic, recreational, and enrichment activities were all found in both the morning and the afternoon times, although not all of these combinations occurred in any one school.

Academic activities included remedial math and reading, homework help, tutoring, computer programming, and preparation for high school. Enrichment included a medical club, dance, cultural trips, videotaping, newspaper production, photography, and art. In recreation were included weight lifting, aerobics, bowling, karate, films, and parties. Breakfast was offered in at least five of the schools, usually in conjunction with one or more other activities.

Mentoring seems to have been intended to be a component of all the extended-day activities, but it was only stressed in the discussion of some of them, particularly the breakfasts that were conducted as mentoring sessions. It may have been an important component of some of the other activities as well, however. The amount and kind of mentoring that occurs in the extended-day activities would be worth focusing on in a supplementary study. Certainly a lot of personal development took place in some of the activities as they were described, for example, a dance program in which the students were involved in all aspects of the production of a show that was then put on for the whole school. Students who did not want to perform worked on lighting, sound, props, costume production, or as stage hands. The students experienced all aspects of a production and were said to have developed a bond of interdependence. In another program, an after-school medical club was held, 2 days at the school and 1 day at a hospital, where each student was assigned to a surgeon and made rounds, and various students learned how to develop x-rays, learned how to lance small wounds, passed a first aid course, and so forth.

A number of the schools mentioned activities that did not draw students as extensively as was wanted, including some homework helping activities but also some in physical education. The approach of the teacher who offered the activities was said to be a crucial variable. It was said that it takes flexible and motivating teachers. The number of teachers who were recruited for the extended-day activities varied, with some facilitators finding it much harder to recruit in their schools than others. Conversely, some teachers who had been recruited felt that they got substantial support from the facilitator and the school administration, while others felt that they got very little technical or material support.

What might be conjectured to be further cause and effect of the success or failure of recruiting was not only the influence of the facilitator as such, and the active support of the principal, but a general acceptance in the school of the worth of the extended-day activities. While there were a couple of schools in which the educational alternatives component was considered to be the strongest part of the program, and many in which one or another specific activity appeared to be highly valued in the school, it was also true that in most schools questions were raised about the overall value of investing funds in various supplementary services instead of in the core academic program of the school. A few programs deliberately tied academic activities to recreational activities in the extended-day program. But the very concept of the "extended day" might have accentuated for some the neglect of the regular school day, their feeling that money should be invested first of all in providing smaller classes and better instructional materials.

Finally, it was argued in several schools that many of the targeted students might be particularly unlikely to attend or be able to attend before- and after-school activities. In a couple of schools, indeed, non-program students tended to be more regular in homework- helping sessions than targeted students. However, such a generalization obviously did not apply to all of the students or all of the activities. These variations suggest the need to monitor which students obtain mentoring, supplementary academic services, and so forth, at different times of the day and from which sources in the overall support system of the school. Such a study could be carried out much more successfully with a computerized data collection than with any of the record-keeping systems now in effect in the middle-school projects, and might be undertaken in a school or schools that had such a technical interest.

## APPENDIX 2:

## CBO CASE MANAGEMENT MIDDLE SCHOOLS

The following section describes the implementation of the Dropout Prevention Program in fourteen middle schools in New York City which utilize the case management model. In all of these schools a community agency was hired by five school districts to provide services designed to alter at-risk student attendance patterns and improve academic achievement. First, the different community based organizations (CBOs) and the services they provide are described. Secondly, the process by which the students in each school were identified is delineated. Finally, the level of implementation of the six Dropout Prevention components is discussed.

### Community based organizations

Five community based organizations (CBOs) provided dropout prevention services to the fourteen middle schools being reviewed. Four of the five CBOs served three middle schools each in either the Bronx, Brooklyn or Manhattan. The fifth CBO, which is a citywide agency offering dropout prevention services to high schools throughout the city, served two middle schools in Queens.

All of the CBOs were contracted to provide services that corresponded to the six different Dropout Prevention Program components: facilitation (supervisory and management) services, attendance outreach, counseling, health services, school level linkages and alternative education programs. Each CBO had a different emphasis in terms of the nature of the educational and counseling services they provided. For example, one CBO utilized vocational counseling and skills training. This CBO engaged in vocational assessment of students in order to provide them with appropriate services. Another CBO focused on educational aspects and cultural enrichment, and planned its programs around after-school tutoring services and numerous Saturday trips. Two CBOs had a strong counseling component. One of the latter CBOs also planned a varied educational program staffed by school teachers which included the arts, computer literacy, and printing.

CBO staff usually included site supervisors, case managers, outreach workers, group leaders and/or youth workers. One agency provided a part-time guidance counselor who divided her time among three different schools. Another agency had on its staff a video specialist and an internship specialist. One agency included a health/career worker. The degree of training that the staff in these CBOs received varied from a few training sessions at the beginning of the project to on-going staff development. One CBO provided its staff with extensive case management supervision and in-service training in adolescent developmental needs, child abuse prevention and positive socialization skills. During spring vacation this same CBO provided its staff with two hours of daily training in group work, community outreach, resource development and home visitation. Most CBO staff had experience in human services or education, with a number of staff members among the CBOs having worked with at-risk students previously.

From both the CBOs' and the schools' perspective, the relationship between the CBOs and the schools was often strained.

Initially. most schools reacted negatively to the CBOs' presence. The receptions ranged from apathy, where the CBO was quietly tolerated, to rejection, where the CBO was explicitly unwelcome. The negative reception received by the CBOs was due to several factors. One was the general attitude held by some schools regarding the Dropout Prevention Program. One school, for example, regarded the program as temporary. In another school, the ability of the program to increase student attendance and academic achievement was doubted.

A second factor was the principals' lack of input in the hiring of CBOs. This lack of input was primarily due to the fact that the district offices contracted directly with the CBOs. A related factor in the principals' view of the CBOs was that the monies were not given directly to them to hire needed additional staff and to conduct their own dropout prevention programs.

A third factor was certainly the late signing of contracts which forced the CBOs to enter the schools well after the beginning of the academic year. Thus, CBOs did not begin implementing their programs in the schools until December. Some CBOs had not entered the school as late as January. In April, many programs were not fully staffed, and some of the program components were not in place until May. The late entrance may have led to perceptions on the part of the school staff that the CBOs were a disruptive influence. This problem was especially true in schools which had already established their own procedures for some of the functions which the CBOs were to perform.

The concomitant perception on the part of CBO staff in many of the schools was that they had problems getting support for various functions. As will be indicated more below, there was a widespread sense that the role of the facilitator was ambiguous with respect to obtaining attendance information. Relationships with DPP or school guidance counselors were very variable. Some CBOs felt they did not have channels to deal with scheduling problems. Some CBO staff got little cooperation from health resource coordinators, and most experienced frustrations in trying to implement a program of linkage with high schools. The CBOs perceived that they were being treated as outsiders in the schools.

Despite these problems, implementation of many aspects of the program did move foward, as will be seen in later sections. DPP staff attributed gains to their persistence with students. Some teachers particularly noticed that the rapport that CBO staff established with students. In one school, teachers wrote letters of commendation to the CBO staff noting their success with DPP students. The relationships between school and CBO staff improved during the year in some of the schools. Whether the school-and-CBO staffs' ability to address students' concerns and needs will have a general effect on attendance and academic achievement will be the concern of future stages of the evaluation.

## Identification of targeted students

The facilitator was largely responsible for compiling the list of targeted students in all but one of the fourteen schools. In two schools, the facilitators worked on their own to review the school records in order to select eligible students for the program. In most cases, other school staff members, such as grade advisors, teachers and guidance counselors, were involved in the process of identification and selection. In a few schools, the CBO was involved, contacting teachers directly and requesting referrals. One CBO reviewed the list of students and weeded out those students who were considered ineligible.

In most schools, the list was refined throughout the year. The number of students on the lists varied from 144 to 200. Fluctuations in the list numbers were attributable to the many changes in the selection criteria. In addition, some teachers and guidance counselors made continual referrals to the program. In many cases transfers and student discharges affected the list.

Of the 14 schools, at least six reported having more than the mandated number of students on the list. Three schools said they did not have the required number of students. The principals of these schools felt that they did not have many at-risk students. They believed that they had been targeted by the Board because their schools fed into high schools with high dropout rates.

The students receiving the services were not always those on the list of targeted students. Although CBOs varied in this regard, the majority felt that they should serve any needy student regardless of whether s/he was on the list. In addition, among the CBOs which adhered to the mandated numbers, it is not clear how many of the students they served were on the list. It would be important to follow up on these claims through written documentation and other sources of information.

The process of identifying students was very cumbersome. A huge volume of student records had to be reviewed, including student attendance, academic records and, in the case of two schools, the previous year's AIDP list. It was suggested that the process should be automated or computerized. This would accelerate the process of identifying target students.

The criteria used for selecting students were a source of controversy. One or two complaints reflected a concern that students who needed services were left out. For example, it was felt that there was too much reliance on past records for identification of at-risk students. Staff felt that there are students whose attendance record does not show cause for inclusion in the program but who are at risk due to poor academic records, emotional and behavioral problems, attitudes toward school and excessive cutting. Others believed that dropout prevention measures should be taken as early as elementary school.

School staff did not appear to know or understand the criteria for recruitment of students into the program. Evidence of this lack of understanding of the criteria was demonstrated in a variety of ways. Many of the staff interviewed were unable to enumerate the criteria. In addition, in several schools, the staff claimed that students who were absent due to illness should not be included in the program. It may be that individuals making referrals to the list had been unaware of the requirement that only students with unexcused absences be included in the program, or that some programs were lax because of a relative scarcity of eligible students. The fact that the criteria were changed repeatedly may account for some inconsistencies. Though it caused confusion and continual restructuring of the list, however, the changes overall allowed more students in need to be included in the program.

## Program facilitation / Pupil Personnel Committee

It is important to realize at the outset that the task of facilitation was larger than the role of facilitator alone. CBO personnel necessarily carried out some of the functions of facilitating. This is obscured at first by there being a person whose job title was "Facilitator," but various negotiations and arrangements had to be made by CBO personnel themselves. The site supervisor had the most authority with his or her own staff to do this, but case managers or group leaders often had to initiate a room arrangement, a request for information from teachers, or the like. Facilitation apparently took place most readily when the facilitator and the site supervisor shared the same space, except in one case where the room was so crowded that it exacerbated the problems of working together. Facilitation was most difficult in schools where the facilitators themselves withdrew from the role in one way or another, and/or where the site supervisor could not be in the school full-time due to supervisory duties in other schools. Fully half the schools had only a part-time site supervisor. Not only did the facilitators not have authority over the remainig CBO staff, but case managers or group leaders did not necessarily have this authority.

Most schools had a facilitator in place early in the year--some schools as early as September. One school did not have a facilitator until March. In most schools, the facilitators were teachers who worked on the project part-time. In two schools the facilitators were also guidance counselors rather than teachers, which had the positive effect of adding additional counseling capabilities to the Dropout Prevention Program. In some schools the facilitators also held other leadership positions such as Union Representative, Chairperson of the English Department, or Dean. In several schools the facilitators were viewed as respected and dedicated teachers, and were chosen by their principals precisely for those qualities. In many instances the facilitator's position within the school enhanced his/her ability to gain the cooperation of the teachers with the DPP staff. In other schools, however, the facilitator's position had the opposite effect and engendered resentment on the part of the teachers. This resentment resulted from the teachers' view that the facilitators had an easy job.

The facilitators were generally aware of the prescribed duties and able to enumerate them. These duties consisted of learning the program guidelines, delegating responsibilities to school DPP staff, coordinating different components of the program, acting as liason between CBO and school, managing paperwork (time sheets, time cards, attendance reports, and monthly service reports) and guidance and counseling. The time and attention devoted to any one of those duties varied among the facilitators due both to time limitations and the particular preferences and skills of the facilitators. This led to complaints by CBO and some school staff that facilitators were neglecting some of their duties.

The facilitators were indeed overworked. The duties enumerated above necessitated full-time attention though most of the facilitators had additional teaching duties and in some cases also had administrative tasks. This large workload led to the facilitators resigning their positions in at least two schools.

A problem in regard to communication and supervision often arose between the facilitators and the district offices. The facilitators felt that there was a lack of guidance and support from the district offices. Within the schools the facilitators were supervised either by the principal or by an assistant principal. It appears that in those schools where the facilitators were able to work directly with the principal they felt more secure in their role.

The facilitators in several schools did play a role in coordinating the different parts of the program and acting as liaison between school and CBO staff. For example, one facilitator explained that he knew that teachers were resentful of the extra work required in recording attendance for the CBO. Since he had a good relationship with the school staff, he acted as a mediator so that the CBO could conduct its job of attendance outreach. This meant ensuring that student attendance reached the CBO staff. Another facilitator sat down with the CBO staff and helped in setting up criteria for incentives. In most schools facilitators helped in providing the CBO with access to school resources. In some schools the facilitators met with the CBO staff on a regular basis.

The Pupil Personnel Committe (PPC) was the second channel through which program activities could be facilitated. Its main purpose was to plan for the program and develop strategies to support individual students. Nine of the fourteen middle schools reported having an active Pupil Personnel Committee. Most of the committees were able to meet an average of ten times, usually beginning in December. Different staff members comprised the committee in the different schools, though in all schools the facilitators were present in the committee meetings. Usual members in any committee were guidance counselors, cluster leaders, assistant principals, deans, family assistants, and CBO case managers and site supervisors. In at least five of the nine schools the principals participated either consistently or occasionally in the meetings.

In three schools, staff who would have normally been members of the Pupil Personnel Committee were not aware of its existence and it can be concluded that the Pupil Personnel Committee did not take place in these three schools. A Pupil Personnel Committee definitely did not function in two more schools. One of the schools explained that the reason for this was that teachers would not meet after school without additional salary. It is noted that in both these schools unresolved conflicts existed regarding the presence of the CBO in the school. This may have been both cause and consequence of the failure to form a Pupil Personnel Committee.

The Pupil Personnel Committee was described by members as a very useful tool. It allowed for administrative problems to be straightened out. One school specifically stated that the committee created or opened channels of communication between the different parts of the program. In another school the Pupil Personnel Committee was used to discuss and iron out school/CBO relations. In addition, many problems relevant to the development of the program and the servicing of the students were said to have been discussed in committee meetings. The committee in one school was used as an educational forum; members were informed of the literature on dropouts, and problems of at-risk students were discussed. In another school, the nature of the meetings changed depending on the stage of the program. At the beginning, programming issues were the main topic of the meetings. As the program progressed, the focus shifted to individual student reviews. Two schools used the Pupil Personnel Committee to plan the following year's program.

### Attendance outreach

Attendance outreach in all schools consisted of monitoring student attendance, contacting students who were absent, and creating and distributing incentives for students' attendance.

It was not clear who was responsible for attendance monitoring. The facilitator was usually held accountable for the task. Due to the facilitator's extensive workload, monitoring was sometimes neglected. There is some indication that the facilitators in several schools would have wanted the CBO to monitor the attendance. Considering the strained relation between the CBO and school attendance office in these schools, it appears that this could not occur. In one district a meeting was held to clarify the roles of the facilitator and the CBO staff in relation to attendance monitoring. However, in most schools the question of who monitored attendance remained throughout the year.

The type of mechanism set up in order to facilitate attendance monitoring and outreach is not known for all schools. In at least three schools a system was instituted whereby the teachers recorded on separate attendance forms the attendance of their students who were part of the Dropout Prevention Program. The family assistant and others responsible for outreach reviewed attendance records and followed up through phone calls, letters, and/or home visits depending on the particular student's situation. In at least three schools TELSOL machines were used to notify parents of absent students.

More personalized methods of helping students attend school were developed. In two schools, closer monitoring of students with more severe attendance problems was conducted. In these two schools, students were asked to report to the facilitator's office every morning. In one school, the facilitator was observed talking to each student as s/he came into the office to sign in. This facilitator appeared to have an individualized approach in her interaction with each student. She was familiar with and addressed each student based on his/her interest and concern. In another school, the facilitator requested that the students leave their coats in her office in the morning and pick them up before going home after school. In each case it was stated that the students appreciated the personal contact. In one school, students who were having trouble getting to school on time appreciated getting wake-up calls in the morning.

In several schools, CBO staff members went to classrooms to confirm the presence of students. CBO staff were also known to approach students in the hallway and ask them why they were not in class. In one school a lunch group co-led by the facilitator and the CBO site supervisor was instituted. This lunch group acted as a group counseling session to prevent students from leaving school indefinitely during the lunch hour. Parent conferences and regular parent meetings were part of outreach efforts in at least four schools.

Several problems arose regarding attendance monitoring and outreach. In most schools the family assistants and the CBO outreach workers complained that they were not getting attendance on time. In one school the person in charge of outreach stated that she had no way of determining whether a student was truly absent or just late or cutting the official class. Consequently, students' parents were notified mistakenly. In one school, the

CBO staff had direct contact with the attendance office and was able to resolve this type of problem by double-checking her attendance record through the attendance coordinator. This was able to take place because the CBO staff shared the office with the attendance coordinator and both parties developed a working relationship. In another school, the same problem was resolved by having letters sent out through the attendance office.

This type of double-checking, however, was not possible in all schools. There were problems between the CBO and the school attendance office in several schools. In one school, for example, the attendance office workers refused to share their records with the CBO staff and attendance records had to be duplicated. In this school the attendance coordinator and attendance teacher were said to have been involved in an outreach effort for ten years and thus felt resentful of the CBO staff.

Home visiting was carried out by family assistants and outreach workers, but also, in one school or another, by case managers or group leaders, by site supervisors, and even by facilitators and their paras. The latter took place in some schools before the CBO began to function. Home visiting was reported by all of the CBOs, and was often referred to by principals or staff as a valuable component of the program. The amount of home visiting seemed to vary according to other responsibilities staff had, how much paper work they had to do, and how well the outreach personnel related to other staff with whom the visiting had to be articulated. Home visiting seemed to increase in the spring as more CBO staff were hired.

In many schools the teachers were appreciative of the outreach efforts and observed that students had been helped. There were schools, however, that did not appreciate the outreach efforts because they were doubtful that students who had been absent for a long time and had often demonstrated behavior problems could be helped within the classroom. Some students were said to recive additional hours of counseling once they were back in school. However, none of the schools assessed had a transitional component to accommodate at-risk students in the classroom setting when they returned to school.

An incentive system was in place in all fourteen schools. Incentives took one or more of the following three forms: material rewards such as T-shirts, sports equipment, calculators, pens, key chains etc.; trips such as horseback riding, dinners, baseball games, theater, camping, dude ranch; or award ceremonies at the end of the month or school year. The major issue that arose regarding the incentive system was that teachers and other school personnel became concerned that rewards were having a negative effect in two ways. First, the fact that the students in the program were being given rewards created feelings of jealousy in students not in the program. It was also feared that students in the program were actually being rewarded for negative school behavior. Students not in the program interpreted the reward system as goodies that students with problems received.

Students were known to try to figure out how many days they had to be absent in order to be picked up by the program.

The problem of the incentives serving to reinforce negative behavior patterns needs to be analyzed in terms of how incentives were being handed out. Some schools were clear in terms of designing criteria for the awarding of incentives. In other schools rewards were distributed more arbitrarily. Another consideration is the fact that many students both those in the program and those outside the program, were lacking in many of the types of experiences that were provided as incentives. In one school in Brooklyn, it was stated that many of the students had never even been to Manhattan. It can be deduced that in many schools the majority of the students have not had the opportunity to be involved in the type of enriching activities that many students in the Dropout Prevention Program were enjoying. In such a situation a reward system for a few can become problematic. The issue of material incentives thus appears to be complicated and requires a good deal of thoughtful planning.

Another problem with incentives was connected with the releasing of monies. In one district, for example, incentives were not distributed until the end of the year due to unavailable funds. In another school the staff complained that even when requests for money were made in a timely fashion, the money was not allocated until after the scheduled date of the trip or activity. One school was given a separate budget line from the CBO for incentives, but complained that it was spending more money on incentives than the CBO. This caused suspicions as to how the CBO was spending its money.

## Guidance and counseling services

Guidance counselors were assigned part-time to work with DPP students in two of the districts with CBO programs; SAPIS workers were employed in another district; and in the two remaining districts, no special counselors were employed for DPP, except CBO counseling staff themselves.

In all fourteen schools, a majority of Dropout Prevention Program students received some form of individual and/or group counseling. In a few schools, regular parent conferences occurred, including parent/student sessions. In one school teacher/student conferences, mediated by CBO staff, were conducted. Another school allowed the CBO staff to sit in on student suspension hearings as advocates for the students. Groups focusing on values clarification, personal adjustment, and/or vocational exploration took place in several schools.

The manner in which these services were provided were formal in some schools and less formal in others. In some schools, for example, CBO staff conducted intake interviews of students in order to assess students' needs and vocational interest. Based on the assessment, a program of individual group and/or vocational counseling and skills training was planned for the student. In several schools, students were pulled out of classes for regularly scheduled individual and/or group counseling sessions. In all schools, students considered to have serious psychological problems were referred to outside mental health and family counseling agencies.

Conflicts between the teaching and the CBO staff arose in regard to the pulling out of students from classes. Teachers were resentful and claimed that pulling students out of the classrooms defeated the purpose of the program -- to increase attendance. It can be said that in certain cases there existed misperceptions on the part of the teachers and CBO counselors in regard to their respective goals. Each appeared to have different goals as well as ways of dealing with the students. Teachers felt that the CBO counselors did not understand what education entails and were not aware of the reality of the classroom. The CBOs, on the other hand, tended to feel that they knew best how to communicate with the students. Many students were perceived to be requesting guidance services as a means of escaping class.

Less formal guidance took place in the form of student walk-ins. In most schools, students were able to request counseling spontaneously during the course of the day. The concept of counseling was used broadly in various cases. In one school, the case manger considered encounters with students in the hallway to be a form of counseling. According to another CBO, a family counseling session was said to occur if on a home visit there was more than one family member present. Informal contacts with students may serve a very important purpose in solidifying counselor/student relationship which can lead to student progress. For this reason, it might be most useful in terms of assessment of program effectiveness if the distinction between formal and informal counseling contacts were made when reporting data on counseling.

In general, most schools were pleased with the counseling services the students received. Positive feelings regarding the counseling staff were expressed by teachers as well as students. It was stated that because CBO staff was not part of the regular school staff, they were able to gain the trust and confidence of the students and thus build rapport. Some teachers felt that students were turned around as a result of the personal contact they received from CBO staff. On several occasions, the DPP faculty in several schools were observed interacting with the students. In every observed situation, the interaction, whether conducted in a forceful or accepting style, showed the CBO staff as demonstrating concern for the student.

The positive results of the counseling component were achieved despite the fact that CBOs did not always work under optimum conditions. Lack of adequate space for the Dropout Prevention Program as a whole led to several counselors conducting interviews in the same room in many schools. The environment was often noisy and there was an absence of necessary privacy. This problem may not be easily remedied since space is at a premium in all the schools. Many of the schools have already gone to great lengths to provide the best possible space. There were, however, a few schools that provided space that was so inadequate that it seriously hindered the quality of counseling services provided by the CBOs.

Another problem encountered in a few schools was the constant turn-over rate of CBO staff. It may be that low salaries are contributing to this situation. The issue, however, needs to be examined further.

## School level linkages

This component was said to be the least well implemented and the most problematic aspect of the program. Few linkage activities took place. Of the fourteen schools, only one had a continual linkage arrangement with its zoned high school. This school conducted joint PTA meetings between the junior high school and the recipient high school. All other schools conducted one or two linkage activities. In six schools an orientation took place at the different recipient high schools. In three of these schools orientation took place after students had already made decisions concerning the high schools they would be attending the following year. Orientation in most cases included a tour of the school, getting acquainted with Dropout Prevention Program students and personnel and, in two schools, program planning with the guidance counselor. Attendance at the orientations varied from a small group of twelve to a group made up of sixty students.

Two schools in one district conducted a parent's night. Parents visited the high school and were provided with dinner and transportation. Two schools conducted an awards ceremony at the recipient high school at the end of the year. One of these two schools paid four high school students to tutor in the after-school program at the junior high school.

Several problems affecting linkage were pointed out. One major issue is the fact that many of the recipient high schools are perceived negatively as being violent and drug-ridden. This tended to be the perception of both junior high school staff and students. A few junior high schools did not encourage their students to enroll in the recipient high schools. At least three junior high schools channeled their students away from the designated recipient high schools. In one school, for example, out of 400 junior high school graduates, only 20 to 30 students matriculated into the assigned recipient high school.

Another problem that arose in regard to school level linkage was the lack of clearly delineated responsibility among staff in this component. In general, it was felt that CBOs were responsible for planning linkage activities, and indeed this was written into the RFP for middle school CBO contracts. Some middle school principals addressed themselves to linkages. For example, one school had wanted to institute a Gates academy model, where junior high school students participated in high school activities. This same school had wanted their older ninth graders to be transferred to a special program in the high school. However, neither of these two activities took place. One school was of the opinion that the Board of Education should be more responsible for making sure that linkage between the junior high schools and the high schools took place. It was suggested in at least three schools that the guidance counselor would be the best person to use for linkage since part of her/his usual responsibility is to channel students into the high schools.

It was also opined that the high school should be more aggressive in seeking students and planning linkage activities. In a number of cases, the high schools were perceived as nonresponsive. One high school limited the number of students that could attend an orientation. Another high school is reputed not to want to put energy into recruiting students from the Dropout Prevention Program. The primary focus of this high school is said to be more to upgrade the academic level of the school. It is believed that many recipient high schools do not get an academically heterogeneous group of students due to the fact that the more academically prepared students are steered into the high schools with better reputations.

## Health services

Ten of the fourteen schools reported that the health resource coordinator from the Department of Health was primarily responsible for providing health services. In all of these schools the health resource coordinator worked part-time at the school, visiting twice weekly. In at least three of these schools, there was also a part-time physician who visited on a monthly basis. Additionally, two of the three schools had a part-time public health assistant who made monthly visits. The health resource coordinator, physician and public health assistant were said to comprise a school-based health team.

Health services provided by the personnel described above were not limited to DPP students but rather made available to the total school population. These services usually included all or some of the following: diagnostic screening, physical exams, routine health care maintence, outreach, referrals (e.g., dental, mental health, family health, substance abuse), individual and group counseling and class presentations on health related issues. No medical services were provided.

Most schools developed a systematic method for ensuring that students in the Dropout Prevention Program received priority over the total school population in terms of health services. In one school the facilitator requested that teachers fill out health forms which were then submitted to the health resource coordinator, who reviewed the health records and contacted the students who appeared to need health services. In other schools a list of targeted students was compiled and the health resource coordinator met with each student on the list. In most schools the CBO played an active role in health service by conferring with the health resource coordinator and/or making referrals on a regular basis.

Criteria for DPP students' referrals were usually behavioral problems, poor class performance, visual difficulties, truancy, stress and depression. Referrals were also made to outside medical services and mental health agencies. These referrals were usually made in connection with suicide threats, drug abuse, family problems and pregnancy. Since it appears that in at least one school referrals to outside agencies not located in the immediate area were sometimes difficult to make, the school health services may benefit from the in-school availability of psychological testing and clinical assessment. Only one school reported that they made these types of services available to students.

The health resource coordinators' perception, where available, of the integration of the health services component into the overall program varied. While in some schools open channels of communication among the health resource coordinator and both school and CBO staff were reported, in others the exact opposite was the case. In two schools where a positive relationship was perceived, the health resource coordinator participated in Pupil Personnel Committee meetings and provided documentation to the CBO on services rendered to DPP students. Communication was also facilitated in these two schools by the location of the health service teams in the same suite as the CBO. It should be noted that even in these two schools the exchange of information between the health services teams and the CBO was perceived as occurring with less frequency than desired.

In other schools where negative relationships were reported, the CBO felt the health service coordinator did not provide them with necessary documentation. Concommitantly, the health resource coordinator did not perceive the CBO as having open channels of communication, outside of the support staff meetings. One school seemed to have a particular problem with the health resource coordinator's availability to both school and CBO staff. Her schedule was not known and she requested that clearance to speak with her be received from the Department of Health.

## Alternative educational programs

The educational alternatives provided to the students in the Dropout Prevention Program can be categorized in terms of academic/vocational alternatives and recreational activities. Academic alternatives included the following:

1. Tutoring and homework assistance. At least nine of the fourteen schools provided these services. Tutoring was carried out by either school teacher, group leaders, and/or high school students. In at least four schools, math and reading specialists were said to teach two to three times weekly.

2. Career/Vocational programs. Different schools offered various alternatives, including:
a) Course in Business Enterprise - This program was supposed to be set up in two schools but took place in only one. Students in this program were taught engraving skills. They made T-shirts and buttons which they later sold.

b) Vocational skills training - Students in three schools were exposed to four weeks of skills training in carpentry, building maintenance, jewelry and business skills.

c) Child care skills - Two schools offered child development classes which were accompanied by child care internships in day care centers.

d) At least three schools offered employment workshops which included interviewing skills.

3. Creative Arts.

a) Video. In two schools, students took part in a video production. They learned how to operate a camera and produced a documentary on their community. In another school, students were also exposed to a course in videotaping and editing.

b) Other creative arts classes included printing, dance, drama and cooking.

4. At least four schools offered classes in computer literacy.

The recreational activities included bowling, weight lifting, gym and horseback riding. Recreational activities also included cultural enrichment such as trips to the theater, the New York Experience, etc. In three schools culturally enriching trips took place on Saturdays.

The number of students who received these educational services is not known for most schools. It was stated that attendance in a few of the educational programs was high, while in most it was low. Again, the late start-up of the programs due to contract negotiations can be cited as one of the reasons for low attendance.

Many of the educational programs took place during the regular school day and required that students be pulled out of their regular classrooms. This included one CBO's taking students by bus to a center offering vocational skills training in jewelry making, business skills, and maintenance work. The students received a small daily stipend for this training, which lasted 4 days a week for 4 weeks. The potential merits of this experience are apparent, but various issues arose. In this and other cases, pulling students out of their classes resulted in the same type of teacher/CBO conflicts that were produced when students were pulled out for counseling. Many members of the school staff complained that they should have been consulted in the programming of activities in order to avoid scheduling conflicts. One CBO, however, stated that they would not have had to pull students out of classes had the school permitted activities to take place after school.

The programs that took place after school at the school site, in which at least six school swere involved, faced different problems. Because these after school programs took place between the hours of three and five, two obstacles arose. Some parents would not give consent for their children to participate. Secondly, the programs were left without security after four p.m., when the security guards left school. In one school, the CBO paid for the extra security for a while but terminated the security guard due to the burden of the extra expense. It was suggested in one school that students would be more likely to participate after school if friends who were not in the program could also come. This points to a potential strength of after-school centers with a more community orientation.

In several schools, teachers were hired to instruct in various educational workshops and to conduct tutoring. This appeared to be an efficient way to compensate for the fact that education was not the forte of most CBO staff. The CBOs had mixed results in different schools using high school students to tutor targeted students. In three schools where the CBO attempted to run a major after-school educational program without hiring teachers, the facilitators tried to prepare activities for the programs, but still the attendance dwindled by at least fifty students fron January to June.

Both the potential and the difficulties of articulating the efforts of the schools and the CBOs seem particularly clear in the area of alternative educational programs.

# APPENDIX 3:
# SYSTEMIC HIGH SCHOOLS

## Introduction

Three high schools were included in the "systemic" program model. The intent of this model was to use school personnel and resources to develop innovations that would impact on the entire school environment, presumably making the school more attractive and beneficial for all students, including those most at-risk for dropping out. It must be noted at the outset that no school adopted a completely systemic program model; all schools contracted with community based organizations for at least minimal services for students. Further, CBO services and other program features were also found to be directed at particular groups of at-risk students, rather than for the school population in general. Schools appeared to have discovered very early that collaboration with other agencies might bring unique resources into the school, and further that at-risk students needed some special attention.

Specific components of the Dropout Prevention Program as implemented in the systemic schools will be described below. With a sample of only three schools, it is not surprising that some successes and problems appear to be quite idiosyncratic. However, we also observed a number of regularities among the schools, which indicate more general program-wide issues.

## Community based organizations

The systemic schools contracted with a variety of community based organizations. Some were social service agencies, which offered services ranging from crisis intervention, to job referrals, to special cultural/ recreational activities for students. Others were organized around particular skills or subject areas, such as video production or conflict mediation. One CBO offered training and technical assistance to school staff. Perhaps because the systemic schools were quite particular in specifying what they expected from CBOs, these community organizations generally seemed task oriented and had few major problems implementing their programs. Like CBOs in the other DPP schools, however, they had a range of experiences regarding coordination with other aspects of the school or support from school administrators. A few CBOs, for example, were largely ignored by principals. The principals were not necessarily opposed to the programs, but appeared somewhat less concerned about the accountability of their smaller CBOs than principals in other models. By leaving the CBOs to their own devices, however, they sometimes failed to maximize program coordination. The CBOs in two systemic schools were thus excluded, at least for a time, from participation in administrative committees responsible for the Dropout Prevention Program.

Further, despite even the most deliberate efforts, communication between teachers and CBOs was not always optimal. Teachers appeared only vaguely aware of programs with which they had had no direct contact, and in DPP's first year not all teachers were exposed to the CBOs. This may have had some effect on the CBOs' ability to involve all school staff in making appropriate student referrals.

Finally, as with each of the other CBOs in other models, service delivery was seriously hampered by delays in contractual agreements between CBOs and the Board of Education. Three programs began in late November, one was not operational until January, and another was not fully staffed until March.

### Identification of targeted students

Each systemic school identified a cohort of eligible students, ranging from 367 to approximately 600 students. The lists of students were generally developed by the DPP coordinator, with varying degrees of input from guidance counselors, administrators, or teachers. The criteria for student eligibility were said to allow sufficient numbers of students to be identified, but there were disagreements over the appropriateness of the criteria. One school reported that additional students should have been targeted, especially students who have been out of school for an entire semester or school year, while the other two schools reflected the view that the Dropout Prevention Program was too oriented to "hard core" truants and should address the needs of students who are more marginal, in particular students who come to school but cut classes.

In the systemic schools, the student list was used primarily to justify the funding formula; program services were not necessarily delivered to targeted students. This finding is basically consistent with the model's objective of developing school-wide interventions. However, some confusion was felt about whether the community based organizations should be using the targeted lists to identify students to work with. This apparently reflects a more general confusion about the program model, and whether the intention is to improve the overall school environment for the benefit of all students or more specifically for the benefit of the targeted students. At least one DPP coordinator recognized the need of checking whether school services "trickled down" to the targeted students.

Two additional issues arose concerning the identification of targeted students. First, as in other schools in this program, significant amounts of time were spent determining whether targeted students had in fact already dropped out of school or were otherwise unreachable. Family assistants and particularly CBO personnel were frustrated by the amount of time spent looking for students who never materialized, and it was generally felt by persons interviewed that such students should have been removed from the lists before the lists were finalized. At this point, it cannot be determined whether schools and CBOs made adequate efforts to retrieve the most hard-to-find students, but it appears that programs did not deliberately look for only the best students to work with.

Second, CBO supervisors expressed a desire to be more involved in the selection of students to receive program services. These supervisors were concerned that their work would be evaluated totally in terms of how many students on the original lists they managed to serve, when in reality many of those students were unreachable and many of the participants in their programs had been self-referred or brought in by friends who were on the targeted lists. Indeed, several CBOs were not even given their school's lists of targeted students when they began their outreach. This issue again points to the confusion over whether CBO services in systemic schools should be addressed to "the list" or to any students in the school, given that a major feature of the systemic schools is that all students are supposedly at risk.

### Program facilitation

In all of the systemic high schools, teachers were appointed as DPP facilitators, usually on the basis of their established rapport with students and other staff members. Although it is probably only coincidental with the program model, all three coordinators experienced difficulties in their new roles. Problems seemed to rest in two general areas. First, as teachers, these individuals had some difficulty infiltrating the administrative power structure of their schools. In one school, the DPP coordinator did not feel taken seriously by the school principal or cabinet until learning to use a particular AP as a "go-between." In another school, although a teacher was ostensibly in charge of the Dropout Prevention Program, the real power appeared to rest with an AP with whom the principal was very close. Since these two individuals had fundamentally different views as to the main thrust of the Dropout Prevention Program, some conflict occurred.

In a sense, the DPP coordinators found themselves with clear administrative responsibilities and an uncertain administrative position. The Dropout Prevention Program apparently intended to "empower" teacher-coordinators by giving them full-time leadership roles with no teaching assignments. However, one administrator commented that this probably hurt the coordinators more than it helped: even deans and APs generally teach at least one period a day, and the special status of the DPP coordinator was derided as an "in-house sabbatical." Coordinators also remarked that they were seen as having enough free time to take on all sorts of extraneous duties -- another problem that some sources felt might have been avoided by giving the coordinators at least one teaching assignment. (Conversely, of course, is the argument that coordinators would have had difficulty accomplishing their administrative functions, and especially would have found it difficult to attend program-wide meetings, if they had been bound to a teaching assignment.)

Moreover, program facilitation appeared to have suffered because coordinators in the systemic schools were not trained to assume the administrative responsibilities that were part of their new jobs. Each coordinator reported, either directly or indirectly, problems that arose because they did not know how to handle a budget or perform some other administrative function. One systemic school appeared to have had to closely supervise the DPP coordinator, who had difficulty managing all the threads of the program. Schools were encouraged (in part, by the nature of the budgetary allocations) to select teachers as coordinators, and this was perhaps a sound policy in terms of finding individuals who understood the needs of at-risk students and could work best with them. However, some aspects of the program's first year might have proceeded more smoothly had administrators been chosen as coordinators or teachers given more specific training in administrative skills.

These concerns over inadequate start-up training were virtually the only substantive criticisms of the leadership and support given the schools by Dr. Victor Herbert and his staff. Overall, the technical assistance and support provided by the central DPP staff were highly valued. In particular, coordinators felt that Herbert and his staff encouraged them to try new ideas, to exert control over school affairs, to work with other schools in the city, and to focus in on the real needs of students. The Dropout Prevention Program appeared to give coordinators a chance to feel as if what they did made a difference.

Another part of program facilitation in the Dropout Prevention Program was to involve some form of pupil personnel committee, designed to ensure that program services were coordinated and met the needs of targeted students. All three systemic schools identified such a committee. In one school it was a pre-existing committee which did not completely embrace the Dropout Prevention Program as a high priority and did not include CBO representatives until late in the year. This school had intended that the program management function would be filled by the team which attended the first DPP Summer Institute, but this goal was not realized. In the other two schools, a pupil personnel committee met regularly, but in one school CBO staff were not invited to participate.

At least one school recognized the need to establish a mechanism for facilitating students' access to information about the Dropout Prevention Program. The DPP coordinator formed a student liaison team; students went to official classes to tell other students about various DPP activities and generally increased the program's visibility throughout the school.

## Attendance outreach

In all three systemic schools, special efforts were made to improve the tracking of student attendance problems. One school treated attendance outreach as a central schoolwide effort and the "hub" of the Dropout Prevention Program. The DPP component was essentially an offshoot of already-established procedures. Five family assistants were hired by DPP to work on attendance, and the CBO had an attendance component that worked closely with the school's attendance office. School personnel were impressed with the CBO staff's commitment to bringing students back into the school, even by pulling them out of bed if necessary. The DPP coordinator worked to relate attendance outreach to the other program components.

In a second systemic school, teachers stayed late to call parents, thus broadening the base of involvement in outreach activities (they were paid with DPP per session funds). The coordinator placed a high priority on retrieving students, investing himself emotionally and professionally in the effort. To a degree, he was seen as too serious and somewhat fanatical about retrieval; other school personnel, for instance, were more concerned with services aimed at the students already in the school.

At the other end of the spectrum, in the third systemic school, attendance outreach was less effectively implemented in the program's first year. Six family assistants were hired with Dropout Prevention Program funds to take charge of phone calling, parent conferences, and home visits. But delays in providing adequate facilities and confusion over job responsibilities reduced the impact of their work. In addition, the CBO staff were not included in attendance committee meetings until the school grew to accept them, so attendance monitoring was not coordinated between the CBO and the school. The school reported having used all of the same outreach strategies and incentive prizes in the past, and there was neither the sense of trying something new nor doing the same thing better with DPP resources. Attendance outreach in this school appeared to be little more than a bureaucratic function of the Dropout Prevention Program.

Variations in the implementation of the attendance outreach component appeared to be in part a function of technical factors such as the quality and training of attendance staff. Family workers were seen as key resources. Because they generally came from the school's neighborhood, they were able to interact with parents and relate to the community culture. However, in some cases the family workers impeded the outreach process. The success of attendance outreach was also a function of how much drive there was on the part of the school to emphasize this activity and coordinate efforts to maximize effectiveness. It may be that perfunctory attention to attendance outreach not only reduces the level of service delivery, but also fails to convey the symbolic message that the school considers every student's regular attendance to be important.

Guidance and counseling

Systemic schools acted as one in emphasizing the importance of improved guidance services, but differed in how they planned and monitored this component. One school established special guidance teams for the ninth grade and tenth grade. In addition, the school contracted for technical assistance and staff development for the guidance department of the school. A community based organization provided group and individual counseling, family conferences, and referrals to outside agencies, seeing itself as a resource not only to students but to the other guidance counselors as well. A social worker was also hired, specifically to train guidance counselors in group counseling.

A second school added an extra member to the guidance staff, utilized CBO services for individual and group counseling of 150 targeted students, and created a special business program through the guidance department to motivate students to attend school. In the third school, however, although three additional guidance counselors were hired, the objective was reported to be simply to reduce the student-counselor ratio and not necessarily to improve program coordination or service delivery. Linkages between the guidance staff and the CBO, which provided some informal counseling, were weak, and the guidance counselors did not team up with family workers either, as originally intended.

The CBOs provided additional counseling services. In some programs, many of the contacts which CBOs maintained with students were informal, with students just coming in to chat once or twice a day. One DPP coordinator stressed that this was exactly what the students needed -- some adult contact so they could unload their problems and frustrations fairly offhandedly and then turn their attention to their schoolwork. Some CBO personnel, however, reported that this informal contact often interfered with more formal case management services, even though it was recognized that students had a strong need to relate to staff on this level. Often, the CBOs were able to hire minority staff members and thus increase the presence of minority adults in the schools. This appeared to have an additional important impact on students.

In the systemic high schools, little provision was made for how to follow students with intensive guidance and counseling services once they had made the transition back to school.

Health services

In all schools, the provision of upgraded health services was seen as a vital component of the Dropout Prevention Program. However, improved health services did not materialize in two of the three systemic schools. In one school, arrangements had been made for a contract with a community based organization which would provide health services, but the contract was not implemented.

In contrast, the third systemic school developed a strong health component. The Dropout Prevention Program provided funds for a bilingual health coordinator, and the CBO made off-site referrals for students. Four specific health problems were identified in the school (child abuse, pregnancy, incest, and asthma), and while baseline health services at the school were deemed inadequate, the "extra" services provided by the Dropout Prevention Program to address these problems were welcomed. Success for the implementation of this program appears to have depended on using funds to hire personnel specifically responsible for health services, and on strong CBO links to community resources for health services.

## School level linkages

No systemic school devoted major resources to developing linkages with feeder schools. Pessimism and cynicism run high regarding the probability of success for this program component. In all three schools, principals and staff reported that perceptions of the high school on the part of everyone connected with the feeder schools -- teachers, guidance counselors, principals, students, and parents -- were very low. The high schools personnel felt that their schools were seen as unsafe and as having low quality of instruction or undesirable student populations. They felt treated as the school of last resort, with middle schools making every effort to place students in other high schools. Thus, these high schools resented the creaming of the better students by the city's theme schools, as well as the lack of initiative on the part of middle schools to work with the neighborhood high schools.

In one systemic school, no DPP money was used to support linkages. The school's one clear linkage, its summer PREP program for incoming ninth graders, had been canceled by the Board of Education, and the school was convinced that additional efforts would be fruitless. Two other schools attempted minimal linkage efforts -- meetings between high school and middle school facilitators and guidance staff, occasional programs for middle school students at the high school, and a parent orientation. But it was widely believed that such efforts were doomed to fail.

Perceptions regarding linkage differ between the high schools and middle schools, and reflect the even wider gaps that exist in efforts to coordinate linkages or improve relations between the school levels. Middle schools and high schools appeared to blame each other for the lack of linkage, and in some cases blamed central school administrations (at the community, borough, or central Board level) for failing to promote positive linkages.

We speculate that a number of factors lie behind the problems of developing linkages. First, middle schools presently appear to have no vested interest in allying with their neighborhood high schools. Perhaps if middle schools were somehow improved by linkage activities (e.g., viable mentoring programs, shared facilities, or the like), they would be more inclined to encourage students to apply to neighborhood schools. Second, despite low applications to these systemic schools, in fact large proportions of feeder school students are eventually assigned to the zoned high schools. Linkage activities that encourage students to enroll in zoned schools may be less important than activities that facilitate smooth transitions from middle school to high school for students who in fact become the high school's incoming class.

### Alternative educational programs

Educational innovations were introduced in all three systemic schools, but with varying degrees of school-wide impact. One school attempted to increase adult-student contacts by adding two additional teachers and increasing the number of extracurricular clubs in the school. This school also began a "teacher tutor" program, in which teachers were released from building duties to tutor students during the lunch periods. Although apparently well-designed and extensively promoted, the program drew fewer teachers and fewer students than were desired.

A second school also added special after-school clubs for students. The third school began several extensive instructional programs, including skills training for special education students, a jobs corps, and a transitional program (lasting from three weeks to a semester) for students returning to school after prolonged periods of high absence. The transitional program provided special services for returning students, ranging from expediting the processing of bus and lunch passes to a self-contained instructional program. This school also reported that the Dropout Prevention Program had impacted the regular school curriculum in five subject areas, through new courses developed by regular teachers.

Each of the systemic schools added CBO services to augment regular instructional offerings. Two schools instituted conflict resolution training through CBOs; one school had a special poetry video project. Other CBOs offered cultural trips as educational alternatives; in some cases, these trips were incentives for good attendance.

Two schools added components specifically oriented toward work readiness, apparently considering the school-work linkage to be as important educationally as other alternatives. One CBO helped schools learn job search skills and offered a referral service. Another CBO made contracts with students; in exchange for good attendance at school, students would be eligible for temporary paid work experiences at community sites.

In terms of numbers of students involved, some programs did appear to serve large proportions of the school populations. However, one common problem regarding the educational alternatives seemed to be the piecemeal approach to innovation. Once again, there was confusion as to whether the goal was to effect wholesale improvements in the school's program or to provide high interest alternatives that at-risk students would be likely to choose.

### Increased security

Security was perceived to be a problem that needed extra attention in the systemic schools, although in some cases the true extent of the problem may not have been as severe as sometimes portrayed. All three schools added measures to increase the quality of security surveillance: one school assigned a highly competent staff member to be the coordinator of security; another purchased additional walkie-talkies for guards, and two schools hired student aides to monitor entranceways, locker rooms, and halls.

The innovations which addressed school security problems by teaching conflict resolution appeared not only to reduce behavior problems but to have a additional positive impact on the school environment. In one school, a CBO (staffed by one woman) trained fifty students and staff members in mediation techniques, exposed nearly the entire school community to conflict mediation through two-day seminars held in regular classrooms, and mediated over 90 disputes. Not only did these activities reduce the suspension rate, but they added quality to the school environment -- an additional program for students to join, the chance to acquire verbal skills and a sense of control over problems, and evidence of a palpable concern for and commitment to doing something to improve the school. Another school used drama to promote conflict resolution skills, again involving students on several different levels. These security programs were, in effect, instructional alternatives as well. They were consistent with an observation frequently made in the effective schools literature, that schools become safe places when they offer meaningful educational programs to students.

# APPENDIX 4:
# MODIFIED SYSTEMIC HIGH SCHOOLS

## Introduction

Three high schools in the Dropout Prevention Program comprise the modified systemic model. This model aims to improve the overall school environment, while at the same time providing for some services to be directly targeted to at-risk students, usually by contracting with a community based organization. In theory, this may seem the most viable model in the program, because it recognizes the dual necessity of improving the school as a whole as well as creating differential school experiences that address the discrete needs of specific kinds of students. In general, schools appeared to conform to this model more closely than schools in other models conformed to theirs, again underscoring the possibility that it most clearly captures the organizational needs of schools and the service needs of students.

The program components described below raise some issues which cut across the entire Dropout Prevention Program and also highlight some of the particular issues which pertain to these three schools.

## Identification of targeted students

In general, the development of targeted student lists proceeded smoothly in modified systemic high schools. Utilizing the specified criteria for program eligibility, the schools identified between 643 and 798 students. As in the systemic high schools, these lists were used primarily to justify the funding formulas. In some cases they were also used to identify students who might receive services under some program components, an appropriate use since the modified systemic model incorporated a clear provision that some services be targeted to at-risk students. This did not always happen, however; several CBOs, for example, never saw their school's list of targeted students, but had to evaluate whether each student they saw met the program's eligibility requirements.

The actual task of identifying students was often a cumbersome one, usually combining some form of selection based on computerized data with manual, one-by-one review of records. On the other hand, one school commented that the process of individually selecting students made the school staff much more aware of the extent and seriousness of the dropout problem.

The modified systemic schools agreed that most of their students were at risk in one way or another, and that the narrow attendance/achievement criteria often resulted in having students placed on the targeted lists who probably were not the optimal candidates for program services. They stressed that, in order to avoid being a "band-aid approach," dropout prevention services should be made available to students who are just beginning to have problems, those who attend school but cut most of their classes, or those who are experiencing some disruptive change in their personal lives or patterns of school behavior. Hence, the broadening of the criteria to allow for discretionary selection of targeted students was a welcome adaptation to school needs.

Student mobility was one factor which produced changes in the target lists over time; in at least one school, new names were added as students moved away from the school. Additionally, schools identified discharges and transfers through the course of outreach efforts, and in some cases added new students to replace those dropped. However, two schools reported relatively little time spent on cleaning up the lists of targeted students. One school claimed that by not officially adding names to the list as students were dropped from it, they were trying to save slots for next year's incoming students; another school maintained that this was not a priority since the list was not used to determine service delivery.

The process of cleaning up the target list to remove LTAs or students who are no longer part of the school was often seen as a waste of time, especially by CBOs trying to locate and enroll contracted numbers of students in their programs. It raises the question of whose responsibility it is to maintain an accurate membership roster for the school -- the regular attendance service or the special dropout prevention program. It also raises the issues of whether the role of CBOs is to locate students and ascertain their true school status or to actually serve students, and whether or not CBO are supposed to retrieve LTAs as well as retain other at-risk students. This has obvious ramifications for CBO accountability. It is important from the students' perspectives as well; CBOs may be working under different assumptions about whether students should be urged to join the school mainstream or be encouraged to enroll in, for example, GED programs.

A final question raised by the entire effort to target students for services is the stigma associated with being at risk or assigned to a special program for potential dropouts. Certainly schools should be aware of which students are at risk, but to call an intervention program the "Dropout Prevention Program" and tell students they are enrolled in it may have a self-defeating result. Schools tried to minimize these stigmatizing effects by renaming the programs.

### Community based organizations

Each of the three modified systemic high schools contracted with community based organizations for specific services. One school selected one CBO to provide an intervention that would improve school security and three additional CBOs to provide educational alternatives; all four CBOs also provided guidance services. A second school used a community service agency to provide individual and group counseling, and to make referrals to other community resources. The third modified systemic high school contracted with two CBOs for services which included job readiness training, peer counseling training and leadership development, crisis intervention and advocacy/referrals, and parent involvement.

In most cases, these community organizations were seen as having important skills or resources that could benefit schools and students. However, although schools sought the CBOs out, this did not necessarily ensure a positive working relationship. Each school suffered a loss of service time due to contractual problems delaying program start-up; in some cases, the anxiety and resentment caused by this colored the year's work for both the school and the CBO. Further, schools' inadequate efforts to integrate the CBOs with the larger school community in some cases resulted in school staff's ignorance about CBO services, a sense of overlapping and competing services being offered by the school and CBO (particularly regarding guidance and counseling), and other generalized antagonisms.

The persistent efforts of CBOs in learning to work with the schools usually paid off in increases in trust, understanding, and mutual efforts towards programmatic improvement. The backing of key school personnel was also vital, although it appeared equally important to build a broad base of support for the community based organizations among the entire school staff and even the local community. Once again, it is clearly important to consider school and CBO perceptions of the appropriate lines of authority and accountability, and to determine what arrangements are most effective. There is a clear sense of having two separate institutions under one roof when CBOs enter schools, and identifying methods for developing positive collaborations should be an important outcome of this evaluation.

Finally, the effectiveness of community based organizations appeared to rely heavily on the quality and stability of personnel. Since the CBOs themselves hire their staff, this is an administrative issue over which the schools have little control, but they certainly feel its impact. Several CBOs had trouble finding staff or had rapid turnover. Conversely, in one CBO which spent much time searching for the right candidates for the jobs, once the staff was on board it seemed to function at a very high rate of competence and efficiency.

### Program facilitation

In all three modified systemic high schools, the DPP coordinator was an assistant principal. Each of these individuals appears to have been selected for appropriate reasons -- because of previous efforts in similar holding power programs or with attendance functions, or simply on the basis of their demonstrated track records of creative and conscientious work in the schools. They each claimed to receive the full support of their principals, possibly not because of their competence alone but also because of their prior standing in the administrative structure of the school. Currently the Dropout Prevention Program encourages the use of teachers as program coordinators; one question to be explored is whether this in fact is the best strategy, or whether administrators have more appropriate skills for the job.

The schools in this model made extra resources available to the program facilitator function. One school, in which the coordinator also retained some duties as assistant principal of a subject area, also hired a .6 FTE assistant coordinator. A second school assigned a family para-professional as the coordinator's assistant, and the third school had a secretary for the coordinator.

In terms of job performance, in one school the coordinator was cited as failing to help the CBOs integrate better into the regular school program. Two coordinators reported that budgetary concerns took too much of their time and they were ill prepared to deal with them. Aside from these concerns, overall the coordinators in this model appeared to be performing well. One coordinator in particular appeared to grow into a role of exceptional educational leadership through work planning and managing a large, complex, and innovative array of DPP services.

Each of the schools in this model used some form of committee to facilitate the integration of Dropout Prevention Program components into the regular school environment. One school relied on the planning team from the first DPP Summer Institute to fulfill this function. In that school, all teachers were given DPP T-shirts and informed about the program, while students were not told about the "Dropout Prevention Program" as such (because of its negative connotation) but instead were introduced to the activities that comprised the program. In the two other schools, facilitation was said to occur through existing committees; one school described the relevant committee as having the primary function of planning case management and referrals to address the attendance and school completion needs of students, where in the other school a number of committees were used, including a guidance committee, an attendance committee, the DPP task force, and two cabinet committees. The use of existing and/or multiple committees to provide program leadership may have diffused the separate identity of the Dropout Prevention Program but also may have enabled the program to impact more effectively on the school environment.

### Attendance outreach

Attendance services were not limited to targeted students in the modified systemic high schools. Instead, DPP funds were used to intensify the schoolwide efforts to improve student attendance. Moreover, the outreach effort was diffused among several different school components: guidance counselors, family assistants and other paraprofessionals, community based organizations, and other regular attendance personnel. In some cases, coordination and the avoidance of duplicate efforts were problems, at least temporarily. Generally, however, multiple efforts appeared to be appropriate, given the size of the attendance problems.

Like others in the Dropout Prevention Program, these schools used a variety of techniques to reach students and their families. TELSOL machines had messages in English and Spanish, and they were followed with personal phone calls, letters, and home visits, usually done by family assistants. At least one school had plans to continue outreach efforts over the summer. The home visits were quite time-consuming but were perceived as important; in fact, the family assistants in these schools were seen as the key factor in improving attendance outreach. (Several schools sent family assistants to the DPP Summer Institute this year, acknowledging their role as important players on the dropout prevention team.) In light of this, special attention to the training and quality of the family assistants appears to be an important priority for the program. One principal in this model only hired persons who were planning to begin some kind of college work to be family workers.

Each of the modified systemic high schools used incentives as rewards for good attendance. There were usually specific criteria governing incentive awards, e.g., a key chain for two months perfect attendance, a pen and pencil set for five months. As in the other program models, school personnel disagreed over which students should be eligible for or receive attendance incentives; some staff believed that the Dropout Prevention Program rewarded chronic problem students and ignored the consistent achievers.

### Guidance and counseling

All three modified systemic high schools added extensive resources for guidance and counseling through the Dropout Prevention Program. One school hired five new counselors, bringing the student/counselor ratio to 250:1 from 600:1. In addition, a CBO was brought in to do group counseling. Another school filled eleven positions in the guidance department, ranging from supervisor to student aide, with DPP funds, and also had the services of two CBOs; the third school used all four of its CBOs to provide additional guidance services, and also hired two more guidance counselors and two ninth grade advisors.

In one school, case management services for students on the targeted at-risk list were provided by the CBOs, and the grade advisors and counselors were also told who the targeted students were and were expected to work closely with them. Other components of the guidance and counseling function, including a number of non-DPP programs within the school, provided services to the entire student body. In the other schools, counseling services were offered by CBOs to the students in their programs; otherwise, the school services were available to all students. Thus, in general the provision of guidance and counseling services conformed to the modified systemic approach -- primarily a school-based intervention with some case management services.

Although the intention in all three cases was to supplement, not supplant, regular guidance and counseling functions, in some cases a school's guidance department resented a perceived overlap in service delivery or exhibited outright hostility to the community based organizations. In this area, it appears particularly important for the DPP coordinator and/or pupil personnel committee to be able to help establish and maintain open lines of communication and well coordinated strategies for service delivery between the school and CBO.

### Health services

The three modified systemic high schools all noted the need for improved health services for students, but none of them instituted major additional services through the Dropout Prevention Program. Two of the schools were fortunate to have daily services from school nurses, Chapter 53 coordinators, and other Department of Health personnel; one school in particular prided itself on its in-house health clinic, sponsored with state funds and organized in collaboration with a neighborhood hospital. The third school had a funded project (which reported having requested to operate in the school) for vision and hearing screening and a teenage pregnancy prevention program. In none of these schools, however, were extra school-based services added or targeted to at-risk students through the Dropout Prevention Program. The DPP program did result in two smaller health-related innovations: in one school, a CBO sponsored a school health fair and another CBO required students to have physical examinations before participating in their programs.

It appears clear from most schools in the Dropout Prevention Program that, while schools acknowledge the importance of health services, this component of the program does not receive high priority in terms of funding or staffing.

### School level linkages

The modified systemic high schools exhibited a wide range of involvement in linkage activities with feeder schools. Two of the three high schools appointed a specific person to be responsible for coordinating linkage activities. One linkage coordinator met monthly with the director of a CBO serving the school's feeder middle schools. However, the only activity reported to result from this collaboration was that middle school DPP students came to the high school for an orientation program, held long after high school applications were submitted. As in other cases, there was a good deal of passing on of responsibility: the high school felt the middle schools were not interested in creating linkages, while the middle schools felt the opposite way.

In another school which identified 20 middle schools that fed into it, the DPP coordinator tried to visit all of the largest middle schools and make information/materials available to them. The high school opened their school to middle school students for weight lifting and computer workshops, but few middle school students attended. It was felt that the middle schools initiated no linkage activities and in fact were not interested in working with the high school. Geography may have played a part; this school draws from feeder schools in the entire borough and younger students often are reluctant to travel very far to a school for any kind of program.

The third high school in this model developed an exemplary linkage program. A faculty articulation coordinator took teams of students to feeder schools for orientation and discussion sessions; middle school students were invited back to the high school to eat lunch and shadow students for the day. The high school even gave incentive gifts, including dictionaries, calculators, and lunch money, to these visiting students. Linkages were also developed between the high school students and a local college. The feeder middle schools appeared to react very positively to these linkage activities, and contrary to what was found in many middle schools, they did not discourage students from applying to the zoned high school.

Whether linkage activities are minimal or high quality, the zoned high schools continue to be plagued with poor reputations and students' consequent efforts to avoid attending them. This problem will probably not be solved merely by strengthening relations with middle schools, as important as that is. What may be required is an array of interventions, including more community involvement in the school, more positive public relations and media attention, and possibly a centralized administrative structure which officially facilitates linkages between middle schools and high schools.

### Alternative educational programs

The modified systemic high schools approached the development of educational alternatives in two ways: by adding on special programs to the school curriculum, and/or by redesigning the entire school's instructional program to address special needs of students. One school used three CBOs to provide an array of alternative programs, including basic skills tutoring, vocational aptitude evaluation and jobs training, and a combination of regular instruction with special trips and activities. The Dropout Prevention Program in this school also sponsored the development of new curriculum plans in several subject matter areas, reduced class size in ninth grade English and math, and supported increases in the number of after-school clubs. Another school also used CBOs to provide job readiness training and tutoring, but in addition developed a transitional educational/social service program for returning LTAs. This program combined instruction, counseling and referrals, job placement, and recreation in a holistic approach toward making the school appealing to and useful for returning students. The staff in this program received specific training in working with LTAs.

The third school seized the opportunity provided by the Dropout Prevention Program to develop comprehensive changes in its program. Among these were the institution of an afternoon school, curriculum clusters for ninth graders with low reading ability, and an array of special programs in history, theater, community/values education, and poetry. A large proportion of the school staff is involved in these programs in various roles, and as many as 400 students were involved in any one activity.

From the school's point of view, the more piecemeal programmatic changes instituted by CBOs were probably most difficult to implement and maintain, because they raised the issues of accountability and coordination. However, it was noted by at least one person interviewed that although CBOs may be perceived by the schools themselves as "outsiders," students see them as allies. Whether or not they add coherence to a student's school life, the extra programs do appear to heighten student interest in school.

Comprehensive organizational changes, on the other hand, can breathe new life into a school program and redirect resources in ways that have long-lasting impact. One critical issue that needs to be explored is the degree to which the Dropout Prevention Program helps a school provide an appropriate "press" encouraging students to participate and succeed. In one school, it was noted that teachers passed by students hanging around outside of the building and spoke to them in a friendly manner, but did not insist that they come into the building. Even the students saw this as an inappropriate response to their behavior. The Dropout Prevention Program may be able to improve this through developing curricula and instructional methods that fit better with student needs, as well as promoting staff behaviors that engage students.

### Increased security

All of the modified systemic high schools voiced concern about school security and worked to keep problems under control. One school used DPP funds to add to its personnel and equipment resources, purchasing additional walkie-talkies and hiring extra deans and paraprofessionals for clerical work. Two schools adopted a preventive approach: one trained security personnel in guidance skills to help students behave peacefully, and another contracted with a CBO to make mediation and conflict resolution services available to the entire school, and to train staff and students in these skills. None of these schools seemed to believe that security was as much of an issue as public perceptions of it would warrant, and they operated under the premise that although specific attention needed to be given to managing security problems, it was equally important to improve the behavior of students by creating an environment more conducive to positive engagement.

# APPENDIX 5:
# MODIFIED CBO HIGH SCHOOLS

## Introduction

The modified CBO model is in place in four high schools, with enrollments ranging from 900 to 2400 students. In these schools, case management services are provided to a targeted population through the Operation Success program run by Federation Employment and Guidance Services (FEGS). In addition, the schools were allocated the five baseline budget constants of the Dropout Prevention Program: program coordinator, Summer Institute staff development, increased security, automated attendance system, and OTPS (other than personnel service funds). With these resources, schools were able to implement a limited range of school-wide improvements.

In two schools, the model in place appeared to approximate a modified systemic approach. Although Operation Success was the primary component of the Dropout Prevention Program, with the largest proportion of funding, in practice it represented a supplement to other school programs and the DPP budget constants enabled the schools to pursue more systemic strategies of change. For example, one school emphasized vocational exploration throughout the curriculum. Students identified a career choice early in the course planning process and were helped to develop an appropriate program of study. All academic departments were required to incorporate some form of career education into their curriculum. Operation Success functioned in part as an addition to this emphasis on careers, through its vocational evaluation, skills training, and internship and job placement components specifically for at-risk students. In the meantime, program budget constants were used in part to provide staff training in mastery learning for all teachers and to fund a transitional instructional program for returning LTAs. In the second school, the Dropout Prevention Program was incorporated into an ongoing school improvement process that also focused on the Comprehensive School Improvement Process and school redesign.

In the remaining two schools, program implementation more closely represented the modified CBO model, with most services provided by Operation Success in a case management framework. One school was uneasy with the inflexibility of having the bulk of DPP funds devoted to the CBO contract and struggled to define a program that went beyond what Operation Success provided. In the second school, Operation Success extended the thrust of a previously implemented program and, although relationships between the school and Operation Success appeared strained, the school was comfortable with the contained nature of the program.

## Community based organization

Operation Success (OS) provided a variety of services to targeted students. Students were referred to the Operation Success program by the DPP coordinator, guidance department, teachers, other students or by self-referral. Outreach to students included mailings, phone calls, and home visits. Once a student was enrolled in the OS program, a realistic educational course of action was planned for that student. In some cases this entailed discharging students from the school and enrolling them in alternative programs. The program's primary services on-site included counseling, psychological and referral services, vocational assessment, and placement in jobs or educational internships. A key aspect of the Operation Success program was its skills training center in Manhattan, where students were enrolled in one of four vocational programs. To add coherence to these students' instructional day, Operation Success agreed to provide facilities for half-day programs of regular school instruction or GED classes, so that skills training students could stay in one location for the entire day. These programs were staffed by school personnel.

In the four schools in this model, Operation Success enrolled between 175 and 470 students. The major problem with the program appeared to be that the skills training center was geographically distant from these schools; students had to travel one or two hours to get to the Manhattan facility and many of them failed to make it there. School principals expressed great frustration with this arrangement.

The other major concern regarding Operation Success was its integration within the school, a problem noted both by school and CBO personnel. Two principals were supportive of the program, promoted the involvement of OS staff in their school planning teams, attempted to familiarize staff and students with the program, and generally tried to help Operation Success establish itself within the school. In the other two schools, administrative support for the program was somewhat less, and in one school the relationships with Operation Success were quite strained.

Additionally, schools commonly harbored some resentment over funding. Since OS had such a large share of the DPP budget, principals acknowledged that they would have preferred to have more money for school-based program components. School personnel also occasionally expressed a concern that the program was not serving enough students and that teachers were not informed about students' progress in the OS program. In general, these concerns may reflect the schools' initial ambivalence about working with a large CBO program and their lack of accurate information about the program.

In three of the four modified CBO schools, the Operation Success program was assigned prime space in the school. One school gave the program less than adequate space, requiring that it share space with the guidance department.

### Identification of targeted students

In selecting students for program services, attendance records were reviewed, usually by the program coordinator, to determine which students were eligible. The coordinators then provided a list of eligible students to the CBOs. In one school, however, the Operation Success supervisor reported that they were never provided with a list. Instead, they looked for their own students and provided a list to the coordinator.

The number of targeted students in these four schools ranged from 120 to 440. A concern across the schools was that many more students were at-risk than were eligible for the program. Many staff appeared to feel that provisions should be made for average students who have good attendance but only fair academic standing to participate in the Dropout Prevention Program. Such students may in fact have problems other than attendance and would benefit from special programs. As a result, even though the Operation Success programs did not officially enroll students unless they met eligibility criteria, the programs occasionally served other students in need. Two schools made requests for some process of continual screening, such that at-risk students could be included in the program throughout the year regardless of the number of students already enrolled.

In one school a list of preliminary LTAs was maintained for students who had more than 10 absences. This list was then shared with Operation Success, so that they could be kept aware of students who were beginning to develop problems.

### Program facilitation

In all four schools the coordinator was either a teacher or administrator who had worked within the school for a fair amount of time, and who had developed a good rapport with colleagues. The coordinators reported feeling supported by other staff and, in most cases, by their principals as well. This network of principal and coordinator is a powerful one. Because of the support and allegiance that exists, the coordinators often transmit perceptions of the Dropout Prevention Program from principal to school staff or CBO, and vice versa. Such communication is not just verbal. The extent to which the CBO is included in the schools' regular staff meetings and PPC meetings, for example, is indicative of the school leaders' regard for the CBO.

In two of the four schools in the modified CBO model, the coordinators appeared to have a limited awareness of the Operation Success programs. They did not supervise the CBO activities and had little interaction with the CBOs' staff. In the third and fourth schools, the coordinator was described as working well with the CBO site supervisor and staff. Little documentation of services was exchanged, but the school and CBO cooperated in planning and delivering services.

Three of the four modified CBO schools had an active Pupil Personnel Committee (PPC) to oversee the Dropout Prevention Program. In one school, it was organized to provide community input into the program and included representatives of community agencies. A second school used the committee to coordinate three major school improvement efforts: DPP, CSIP, and school redesign. The committee in the third school had been in existence prior to the program's inception, but actively took program concerns under its purview and invited representatives of Operation Success to participate. In the fourth school, the coordinator was unaware of any PPC, although the principal stated that one did exist.

In developing the Dropout Prevention Program, the schools unanimously reported receiving excellent support from Victor Herbert's office. This included emotional and programmatic support for the coordinators, help in cutting through bureaucratic red tape, and receipt of extra funding. However, there was concern that not enough training had been provided to the coordinators in the area of administrative procedures.

## Attendance outreach

Standard procedures for documenting attendance were in place in all four schools, at both school and CBO levels. The schools' attendance records generally were maintained in the attendance office by an attendance teacher or coordinator. Outreach consisted of mailings, phone calls, and home visits. In several schools, the Dropout Prevention Program funded family assistants, who monitored the attendance of targeted students, made phone calls and home visits, and reported to the coordinators. The coordinators, however, did not keep formal records of the attendance of targeted students. In all schools, Operation Success programs maintained records for their targeted students and did some attendance outreach, but their efforts were generally not extensively coordinated with school efforts.

All schools reported that the LTAs were the hardest to reach and some staff questioned the benefits of such efforts. Staff in one school felt too much attention was being placed on the retrieval of students who perhaps would be better off in alternative schools. However, in two high schools, attendance outreach resulted in the need to add transitional classes for returning students. Another concern expressed in these schools was that the high rates of student mobility adversely affected attendance statistics.

Incentives were part of the attendance outreach effort in all four modified CBO schools. Targeted at-risk students with improvement in either attendance or achievement received a variety of prizes or awards. In several schools, the entire school population was eligible for some incentives. The incentive programs were a source of controversy in some schools.

Some of the staff in these schools questioned the practice of rewarding "bad" students as opposed to the "good" students who are already in school and who do perform well. Some staff were of the opinion that incentives were unnecessary.

### Guidance and counseling

The Operation Success program in all four schools provided some form of guidance and counseling to targeted students. Services included individual and group counseling, career counseling for skills training and internship students, and family counseling in one school. In addition, coordinators provided informal counseling to targeted students in at least two schools.

In several schools, the Dropout Prevention Program had an impact on the regular school guidance services. In one school, both 9th grade counselors made additional efforts to work with the targeted students. In a second school, DPP funds paid for a special counselor to serve 300 Haitian students. In the third school, the central DPP office arranged for additional support services for students or for students to be referred to services outside of the school. However, there appeared to be little interface between school and CBO counseling efforts.

Although some efforts were made, it was reported that this component would be greatly improved if additional personnel were provided. For example, three schools stated a need to develop services for the large number of LTAs returning to school. Family counseling and outreach was another area mentioned by two schools as needing more resources.

### Health services

Provision of additional health services for at-risk students was one of the most weakly implemented components in all four schools. Although health resource personnel were on site, the quality of general health services in all four schools was described as inadequate.

In one school, a health resources coordinator was on site, but did not specifically screen targeted students. In a second school, staff called for additional services, which were finally provided in April, in the form of a full time health coordinator funded through the Dropout Prevention Program.

A similar situation occurred in a third school, where the health resource person did not arrive until late spring. The person was paid through DPP funds and operated out of the regular health office. Referrals were made; seminars were held for parents; and resources were provided for health crises and pregnancy. In the fourth school, a community health person visited the school 2-3 times a week. No special follow-up of targeted students was undertaken.

The CBOs did not screen targeted students for health services. Rather, they made referrals to outside agencies where necessary. In addition, the Operation Success program in one school sponsored a health fair for the whole student body.

## School level linkages

This component was unevenly implemented in the schools. Some informants claimed that the high schools were resistant to linkages, while others blamed the junior high schools.

In one high school which had had long standing problems establishing linkages with its primary feeder school, Operation Success was able to establish a linkage largely through a similar FEGS-sponsored program at the feeder schools. The CBO site supervisor had direct responsibility over all schools involved and therefore coordinated the linkage. Linkage activities included having middle school students attend classes and a camping trip with high school students; assigning high school students to be tutors at the middle schools; and having the school levels work together on a radio station, a video production, and a law day program.

In the remaining three high schools, linkage was reportedly affected by the middle schools' perceptions of the high schools. In all three instances, high schools were viewed as a last resort for placement by the feeder schools. One school reported that middle school principals were advising counselors and parents not to send students to the zoned high school. In this same district other high schools were being redesigned, and this was also said to contribute to the skimming of potential students from the DPP school. School staff reported feeling helpless in this area.

Despite the odds against its success, this component was described to be a priority in the schools, and at least some administrative support was given to it. One high school sent teams to middle schools for orientation programs, and sponsored activities at the high school for middle school students. A second high school hosted middle school administrators and staff for several programs, and opened a variety of school facilities for use by middle school students. Both schools felt that these activities only reached students who would have ended up in the high schools anyway. Linkages were reported to be very weak in the third school. The staff in that school felt that unless a more diverse population was recruited, the effects of the Dropout Prevention Program would be minimal. They contended that it is not beneficial to have the same "type" of students, the at-risk students, all housed in one school.

## Alternative educational programs

The aim of this component was to provide a variety of educational programs appropriate to student needs. Operation Success was the primary educational alternative for at-risk students in the modified CBO schools. Operation Success offered career education workshops and internships, skills training, and, for some schools, an off-site GED program. The schools generally reported a positive response to the Operation Success programs, although there were some concerns. School staff were concerned about the distance students had to travel to reach the skills training site in Manhattan. The staff in one school felt the options were appropriate, but reported an overriding sense that academic perseverance for this population was not high. The staff of another school reported mixed emotions regarding the value of programs and their ability to meet student needs. Finally, some staff were reluctant to fully accept the Operation Success programs, for fear that they were "windfall programs" which would not be maintained indefinitely and would therefore leave a gap in the schools' curricula once they were discontinued.

Each of the four schools had some alternative educational programming in addition to Operation Success. Programs across the four schools included peer tutoring workshops, transitional classes for returning LTAs, PREP classes, mentoring and homework helpers. One school developed an evening program for dropouts prior to DPP; it was continued and its participants were referred to the Operation Success program as well.

Another school adopted a career/community service curriculum and geared its alternative education programs primarily to the school population as a whole. The only special program for "at-risk" students within this school was a PREP program for ninth graders.

A third school offered a co-op program which enabled students to work for a large corporation for pay. Their program included a mix of academics, they were closely supervised, and upon graduation they were guaranteed a position with the corporation.

### Increased security

Reports of security problems in the four modified CBO schools ranged from "not a problem" in one of the schools to "an ongoing problem" in another. In the latter school, the school was described as orderly, but there was concern about a drug ring which operated in the school's environs and on one occasion a security guard in the school was suspected of providing drugs to students.

The remaining two schools reported that discipline, rather than crime and violence, was the chief problem. Students frequently roamed the halls, creating noise and disruption. One school reported problems with securing doors within the schools.

The second school spoke of security guards as having difficulties dealing with outsiders who wandered through the school. In three of the four schools, security problems were posited as one explanation for the schools' negative reputations among the feeder middle schools.

Some additional security services were provided as a result of the Dropout Prevention Program. One school purchased two additional walkie-talkies and another hired additional security guards. All schools had the automated attendance entry system installed by the end of the school year, which was supposed to restrict student passing in and out of the building.

## APPENDIX 6:

## PURE CBO (OPERATION SUCCESS) HIGH SCHOOLS

### Introduction

The three state-funded Attendance Improvement/Dropout Prevention (AIDP) program high schools included in this evaluation all have in place the Operation Success (OS) program model. Operation Success, a work readiness and experience program which provides counseling, guidance, work experience, skills training, and family support, is operated by Federation Employment and Guidance Services (FEGS), a community based organization. The program has been implemented in New York City high schools since 1982; one of the schools in this model was the original OS school. The CBO contract comprises the major proportion of funding for the AIDP program in these three schools; the program includes some funding for attendance outreach and a small amount for other purposes within the school, and program facilitation is provided through the school's regular budget. Thus, this model is considered the "pure CBO" model, because it targets services specifically to at-risk students through a case management model implemented by a community based organization.

Two of the three high schools in this model serve a predominantly minority student population; the third has an even distribution of white and minority students. All three schools have experienced major changes in their student populations. One school recently changed to a co-educational program. Another went from a balance of white and minority students to an almost completely minority student population. The third serves two very distinct student populations -- relative newcomers who bring to the school the cultural richness and the educational problems associated with urban, poor, minority groups, and children of the blue collar, homeowning white families who own many of the local businesses.

All three school principals stated that they were open to the Operation Success program or were pleased about its presence in their schools. Although the Chancellor's special circular presenting the AIDP program (#29, June 7, 1985) implied that schools could choose from several AIDP options, no principal reported having had a choice over which AIDP program model to implement; at least one principal, however, did consider the programs of other community based organizations.

In all three schools, Operation Success is a readily visible entity. The program has been allotted significantly large (though not adequate) space in the already over-crowded schools - perhaps a sign of the schools' commitment to improving attendance. Operation Success's physical presence is, in and of itself, a change in the school. One does not often see a large, open room with materials such as fliers and brochures available at the front, or students and adults interacting in a free-form manner quite different from the interactional norms of the classroom or the guidance counselor's office. The Operation Success room conveys the feeling of a project in action. The large, open space, the level of activity, the slogan-filled posters on the wall, and the freedom to move around all contribute to this campaign-like atmosphere. The environment seems to say - "We are here fighting against high dropout rates. We are fighting together for a cause."

## Identification of students

In all three schools, identification of students to receive program services was problematic. The target numbers upon which contracts were based ranged from 300 to 495. Each school interpreted its target figure differently. One used it as an estimate only and Operation Success served approximately the targeted number of students. Another school used the number as a minimum; Operation Success refused to turn away any student in need of the services they provided and reported a caseload that included nearly one hundred students more than the contract stipulated. A third school used the number very exactly and apparently serviced the precise number of targeted students specified in the Operation Success program contract.

All schools reported some dissatisfaction with the criteria for program eligibility. One school could not identify enough students for the program until the criteria were modified. Two schools felt that the criteria were not allowing a wide enough range of at-risk students who could benefit from additional services to enroll in the program. One OS program exhausted all the lists of eligible students it was given by the school before reaching its target number of students to serve, and attempted to work with in-house freshman truants.

The lists of students which Operation Success was given, from which to identify students eligible to receive services, were almost always incomplete, had missing information, or were not up-dated. This held true for all three schools. Much time and effort was invested in cleaning up the lists, particularly in identifying LTAs. In one school it appeared that the school generated the list for Operation Success; in another school this was done jointly. In the third school the program was not given a list with sufficient numbers of eligible students until March.

## Program facilitation

The role of the facilitator in each school is critical.

Since Operation Success is an outside agency working inside the school, the potential for conflict and resentment abounds, and the facilitator in some respects holds the key to the success or failure of the program. In all three schools in this model, the facilitator served as the liaison between the program and the school.

In all three schools, the facilitator had had some previous experience with at-risk students and with program coordination. On the other hand, they were all chosen for the different strengths which they brought to this new position. One facilitator had a strong psychology background; one a history of meticulous and thorough record keeping; and a third a reputation as a dedicated and resourceful teacher.

In at least two schools, the facilitator appeared to maintain a very good working relationship with the principal and to work very closely with the Operation Success staff. Few problems were reported in these schools regarding program facilitation, although some facilitative activities (e.g., the identification of targeted students) were unevenly implemented. Not all schools had a high level of staff awareness of Operation Success, but the program was more or less established in each. This was definitely more true in the school where Operation Success had been in place for five years.

The Chancellor's guidelines for the AIDP program specified that participating schools would institute a pupil personnel committee which would recommend a comprehensive framework of services for targeted students. All three schools reported having active pupil personnel committees. These committees were said to have met at least as often as once a month, and sometimes weekly or biweekly. The substantive content of the meetings varied greatly. One school reported these meetings as crucial to the smooth running of the program. The committee coordinated the different program components, fostering collaboration and avoiding duplication of efforts. Another school's pupil personnel committee, however, seemed to exist simply to fulfill the formal requirement more than it acted as an integral part of the program. In the third school, representatives from the school and Operation Success met periodically to discuss program issues and sometimes to discuss individual student cases.

Personnel from Operation Success were responsible for program coordination as well. Each school had a site supervisor, and assistant project directors floated among several schools. In general these individuals were seen as competent and obviously committed to the success of their programs. Even when OS supervisors disagreed with school practices regarding the program, they took an accomodating stance and worked with the schools in developing useful solutions to problems.

In two of the three schools a frequently cited issue was the turn-over rate of the Operation Success staff. In both of these schools there had been more than one on-site supervisor. In fact, one school had had three. There had also been a changeover in case managers and one school had only two of the three allotted positions filled at the time of the evaluators' visit. Staff turnover during the school year is not commonplace in school settings, and school students and staff may perceive the presence of an agency with a high turnover rate to be disruptive of school routines or indicative of a disorganized program.

## Attendance Outreach

The implementation of this component varied greatly from school to school. One school described the outreach program as the major school campaign for 1985-1986. Efforts included early morning preparation periods for teachers and paraprofessionals to make phone calls, a parent's attendance team to make calls after school, daily telephoning services by machine (although this was in place prior to Operation Success), and awards and incentives.

Another school described attendance outreach as the program's weakest component. The different groups within the school (transitional class, off-site GED program, and regular attendance office) appeared to do their own outreach and efforts were not coordinated. The Operation Success program reported the use of Successgrams and TELSOL phone calls, but they did little personal outreach. In this school there were no prizes or material incentives, but students with improved attendance did take place in a FEGS awards assembly.

In the third school, Operation Success followed students enrolled in the program; many phone calls were made and letters sent out, and OS kept close records of student attendance. Some duplication of effort between the Operation Success staff and the school attendance office was reported; there appeared to be a relationship between the two that was driven more by competition than by collaboration.

## Guidance and Counseling Services

The quantity as well as the quality of guidance and counseling services provided in each school varied to the extent that one school saw guidance services as its strength while another as its weakness. In one school, the counseling was completely coordinated between Operation Success and the school by the school AP Guidance. In another there was no coordination and almost all of the counseling of students in the school was provided by Operation Success. In the third school the provision of counseling services by the CBO was a source of great tension and resentment in the school; although the facilitator claimed that s/he and the CBO referred students back and forth, another guidance counselor expressed the view that, if the school were given equal resources to what Operation Success had, they could provide a comparable level of services.

In all three Operation Success schools, an undercurrent of tension was perceived over assessments of students' needs for vocational counseling and/or personal guidance. The Operation Success program was intended to provide both vocational and personal adjustment counseling. In fact, however, it appeared that a large proportion of the CBO's work with students took the form of drop-in counseling or crisis counseling and did not follow a case management model. While this obviously answered a need for students, the question was raised whether the Operation Success program was making use of the programmatic resources that it brought to the school.

## Health Services

In two schools this was reported as the very weakest component in the program. Both these schools, theoretically, used health resources that were already available in the school or referred students to existing community resources. But in both schools health services appeared to be a tangential service; one on which not much importance was placed. The Operation Success program sponsored a health fair in one school, and regularly referred students to outside health agencies, particularly in the area of teen pregnancy.

In the third school, the AIDP program included a health coordinator who worked in the school two days a week. In addition to the regular health services mandated by the state, this person made an effort to identify health problems of students which were related to attendance and refer them to the Department of Health for follow-up. This facilitator worked with Operation Success to run a four day workshop in the school on teenage pregnancy.

## School Level Linkages

Although the specific implementation of school level linkages varied greatly among the three schools, they all seemed to have attached less significance to this component than to guidance, attendance outreach or alternative educational programs. This may have been due in part to the general confusion over who was responsible for linkage activities -- the feeder middle schools or the high schools. It appeared that when successful linkages did take place, they occurred either through an established program that also existed at the middle school level, or through a mutual desire on the part of middle and high school administrators to work together on linkages.

One school reported that activities such as special lunches and tours of the school were undertaken through the AIDP Project Connect linkage between specific middle schools and the high school, but that this was only true for previous years and not in 1985-1986.

Another school reported that they had sponsored a program in which junior high school students made one visit to the high school per year. During that visit the JHS student followed a HS student around for the day. Although this program was said to reach approximately 150 students over a 15 week period, apparently there was no follow-up, in part because the official "feeder schools" were not in fact schools that sent students to the high school.

The third school had initiated a linkage program with one specific middle school prior to Operation Success. This middle school had higher academic achievement than the high school's other feeders, and the high school wanted more students from that school. In 1985-86, however, extra funding was received for Project Connect linkages with two different feeder schools with higher at-risk populations. The high school facilitator met with the middle school facilitators, and there was one orientation program, but these activities were not seen as successful. The high school principal interpreted this as due to a lack of commitment on the part of the JHS administration. The AIDP facilitator, on the other hand, was more optimistic about future opportunities for linkage, given the initial contacts that were made.

The person who assumed responsibility for the linkage component also varied. In one school it was solely the school facilitator and in another the Operation Success staff.

### Alternative Educational Programs

The primary educational alternatives offered by Operation Success are skills training, educational internships and job placements, and a GED program staffed by school personnel but housed at the Operation Success facilities in Manhattan.

All three schools in this model sent some of their targeted students to FEGS for skills training. All felt uneasy about having students travel so far from their own neighborhoods to get to the skills training center; they considered this to be a deterrent rather than an incentive. All complained about the small numbers of students who were actually enrolled in skills training and suggested that similar programs should be instituted closer to the schools.

Two of the AIDP schools had instituted blocked academic programs for many of their targeted students. These were alternative programs which the school offered independently of Operation Success, but since the student population often overlapped, there was some coordination of services.

One school reported that the GED program is the most attractive component that FEGS offers, but since it is not an accredited program, students must often be referred to other accredited programs. Two schools participated in this off-site educational program during 1985-86; the third school has plans to do so in the coming year.

One source of confusion regarding the educational alternatives offered by Operation Success was that schools were generally only aware of the skills training program. It was never intended that all targeted students would enroll in skills training. The alternatives for the non-enrollees include educational internships, job placements, and linkages with community resources. Regarding the latter, a community resource specialist in one of the AIDP high schools organized several cultural programs for the entire school population which were widely appreciated.